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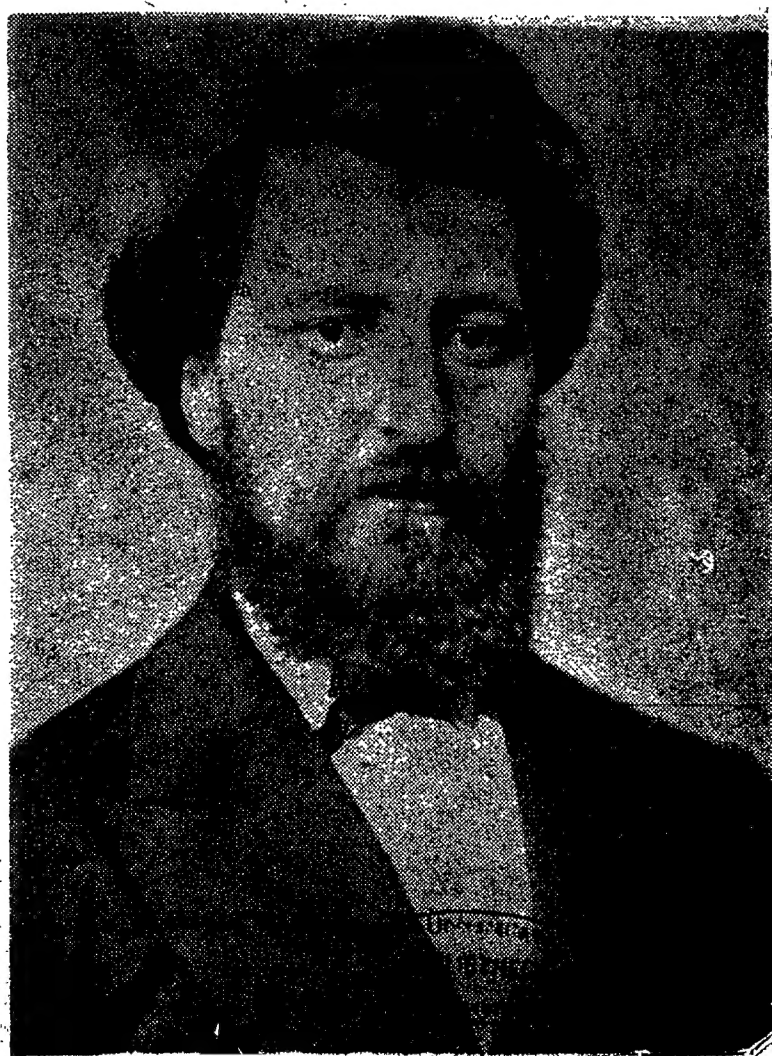
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF LOUIS RIEL

Dr. Fisher Newman
Boulder

he Life and Times of LOUIS RIEL . .

By

William McPartrey
W. M. Davidson



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WHEN the late W. M. Davidson, founder of *The Albertan*, retired from journalism in the 1920s, he gave his attention to research into the life of Louis Riel, the man who led the Metis of Manitoba and Saskatchewan in their fight for self-government during the last century, and one of the most controversial figures in Canadian history. Mr. Davidson's research was broad and sweeping. It embraced the archives of two countries, the examination of countless old documents and personal interviews with many who were alive and active in the events that culminated in Riel's death on the gallows in 1885. The result was a biography that for wealth of detail surpassed anything previously written about the Metis leader. A condensation of this biography, hitherto unpublished, complete in outline but omitting the copious footnotes, appeared in *The Albertan* in serial form in November, 1951. In response to many requests, the episodes have here been put together in pamphlet form.



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The LIFE and TIMES of LOUIS RIEL

By W. M. DAVIDSON

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Chapter One

IN France in the seventeenth century, the Riels were a family of "petite noblesse" ancient in Normandy. In the Fronde wars, the sword of young Jean Baptiste Riel, called "San Souci" by his comrades for his carefree dash and audacity, was at the service of the King. After those wars France was impoverished, exhausted, and starving, and San Souci saw little prospect of personal good fortune. With his young wife he joined a band of Irishmen who had been his comrades in arms, and went with them in 1660 to Ireland, where the hope was that with the restoration of the Stuart Kings the penalties upon Roman Catholics would be lightened and they could live and prosper peacefully.

But the period of religious freedom and family comfort in Ireland proved of short duration and after the uncertain days of the Stuarts, came return of religious persecution almost as harsh as in the iron days of Cromwell. The Riels lived for forty-four years in much tumult and torment, enduring the horrors of the siege of Limerick where they had their home, and persecutions scarcely less terrible which followed.

In 1704, Sans Souci, by that time a patriarch with a large family, decided to leave Ireland and take his family to New France, hoping for a less tempestuous life on the Indian frontier. He left behind in the old world only his acquisition of a good reputation; and he took with him to the new, little more than the name Riel d'Irlande which the family bore for many succeeding generations.

They arrived toward the end of an era when the *coureur de bois* was the hero and the beaver pelt the chief means of wealth. But Sans Souci's children and their descendants adapted themselves successfully to those and to changing conditions through two centuries of Indian

wars, international conflicts, political evolutions without and social transformations within.

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JEAN Baptiste III, grandson of old Sans Souci, was the head of the family at the time of the British conquest in 1760 when French rule came to an end. All French Canadians were by that time so remote from their original country that they had almost no social or family ties with France and had begun to feel themselves a new and different race. By reason of their Irish interlude, the Riels had this sense more strongly than most families, and as British control deprived them of nothing which they cherished—their lands, freedom of religion, language, and familiar laws and customs—they were particularly contented with their lot. In the next generation Jean Baptiste IV regarded with disfavor and some contempt the revolt of the English colonists to the south with their emphasis upon political liberty. When the revolution succeeded he was one of those who most rejoiced that they were completely cut off from such Puritan neighbors with their strange

blue laws and their anti-Catholic prejudices. He surveyed with satisfaction the increasing prosperity and the mild way of life of the numerous descendants of old Sans Souci, safe and comfortable upon their snug little farms of their own clearing and busy with their crafts in the isolated colony.

But such security, on the tiny scale it was and with change almost imperceptible, brought a sense of monotony to some of the next generation. When fur trading companies expanding in the remote unknown western plains of the continent sent dashing men into the Quebec villages to recruit adventurous youth to their service Jean Baptiste Riel VI, tired of old tales of olden times in Quebec, broke the long continuity of the family and in his early twenties, at the close of the eighteenth century, set out alone on the third stage of the long family Odyssey. He came to what is now Manitoba and Saskatchewan but was then a vast wild lonely plain teeming with buffalo and fur bearing animals and penetrated by but a scattering of white men living adventurously and homelessly, the furs of animals their only commerce, and the buffalo their main means of subsistence.

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AT Isle la Crosse, he chanced upon a half-breed girl of great beauty, her white ancestry endowing her with an arresting appearance in contrast to the native Indian women. Her father had been one of the earliest white men to penetrate the Saskatchewan area and her mother the daughter of a Chipewyan chief descended from Algonquins more familiar to French Canada. There were as yet few half-breeds and those widely scattered and only by chance come upon. He married her Indian fashion, there being no missionaries as yet. Little is known of the romance as the union lasted only a few years, but Jean Baptiste himself started a fame which became a family legend of the great beauty of the strange girl who bore one

child and died soon after. Jean Baptiste named this child, a son, Jean Louis.

It being impossible for him to rear this child properly in his widowhood in such a country he gave up his adventures and took the boy to Quebec. In Quebec Jean Louis was schooled in the hope that he might serve the church in some capacity — his father thought the Oblate Order a desirable possibility.

But Jean Louis had a subtle sense of being apart from the other parish children and from his father's family; and when he attained maturity and the right to make his own decisions he deserted old Quebec and ventured as his father had done into the country of his beautiful, strange mother.

The girls he saw on the plains at first failed to satisfy his imagination. But soon, in Red River, he became acquainted with the white family of de Lagimaudieres with their flock of prairie-born children and their fascinating history of two generations upon the prairies. Julie, the sixth child of Marie Ann Gaboury, the first white woman of the country, captured his affections and as soon as possible he married her and started a new life with a feeling and intention of permanence.

In the third stage of the Riel Odyssey, a Riel, the seventh generation in North America had started a new line, upon the prairies of the west, far from old Quebec.

Julie's first child was a boy and they named him Louis.

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BY any accepted standards of greatness in pioneering, Marie Ann Gaboury, grandmother of Louis Riel, was supreme just as she was the most interesting of all famous pioneer white women. Nothing in her girlhood foretold it—she was a petite, demure, but hardy and determined little French-Canadian girl endlessly busy in a dull little Quebec parish, and at the age of 23 had never been five miles away from the house in which she was born, and had never known excitement

exceeding a long wedding celebration or a parish church festival.

Her family was almost as old in Quebec as the Riels; the history of French Canada was vivid to her as family lore. She was late marrying, and might have gone on in the slow rhythm of that parish but for the sudden arrival of a son of the de Lagimaudieres, returning after five years in a far-off strange country to the west, a boisterous valiant youth full of tall tales and swagger. He broke into her life and changed everything. Before the end of the winter, she married him.

The idea of parents and parish had been that they would settle down like their families and that young de Lagimaudiere would forget all that incredible nonsense about roaming the plains and hunting the buffalo on the other side of the earth. But he found he could not, and soon began to tell Marie Ann of a plan to return "just for one little year." Oh yes, he would come back, after just one little year. Marie Ann listened without comment for some time; when she spoke it was to make a condition for her consent: he must take her with him. When he pointed out that there was no white woman — not one — no houses, no priests or parishes, few people but savage Indians, and that there were wild animals, and bitter cold, she brushed it all aside. If he could live there, she could. But there was not one white woman, he argued weakly. Marie Ann had an imagination to appreciate that in olden days there had been no white woman in Quebec; but there had come a first white woman; and for that woman that must have been a very great thing — she had been noted and remembered, and after her had come many women who looked up to her and learned from her. By that process had come a new race. She would go — and that was an end of it.

They soon set out, to the consternation of relatives and parish.

The journey to Red River was a perilous thing in 1808 — if you gave your mind to perils. But de Lagi-

maudiere had made it several times, he had five years' experience of the wilds and was already an experienced plainsman with a reputation for ingenuity to get out of tight spots successfully. And Marie Ann did not give her mind to perils — she watched and learned.

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AT Pembina near the end of their journey, Marie Ann gave birth to her first child, a boy they called Renee. Because of those delays she had the benefit of only two days' respite in the hard travel; they must make winter camp at Red River and with winter closing in they dared not tarry.

De Lagimaudiere was a hard-working active adventurer, industrious the whole of the season. He assembled an outfit at Red River that winter with which they set out next spring on a 1,500 mile trek to the Rocky Mountains carrying baby Renee with them and hunting, trapping and trading on the way as chance offered. At the onset of winter they made camp at Fort Edmonton, a remote post established by Hudson's Bay Company a few years, before.

Next spring, Marie Ann bore her second child, a boy whom they named La Prairie because he had been conceived and born on the open prairie. It was almost a tragedy — Marie Ann's horse took fright at stampeding buffalo and ran away with her many miles before her husband overtook and stopped the animal. That was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and three hours later her confinement was upon her. But La Prairie was a beautiful, fair, blue-eyed, yellow-haired one; and with him Marie Ann knew the prairie to be her country forever. She lost all yearning for Quebec and hoped never to leave a way of life she was coming to master and love.

They lived thus, nomadic upon the vast lonely plains for six years, Marie Ann bearing five children and rearing them successfully and her husband prospering and acquiring further good reputation. Near tra-

gedies were often and strange—too many to relate here; they have become folk lore in Manitoba and command attention from historical chroniclers.

But with the fifth child, de Lagimaudiere found his family unwieldy for trekking and his prosperity equal to maintenance of a more settled existence. He persuaded Marie Ann to accept cabin life in Red River, which was beginning to be a settled centre. Thus her sixth child, Julie, was born under settled conditions in Red River and grew up there to marry Jean Louis Riel an educated young man newly arrived from Quebec.

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MARIE Ann had seen Indian women marrying white men and striving to adapt, and with the prestige of the first white woman and the experience of her adventurous years she helped them, feeling human kinship and wanting neighborliness. She saw half-breed children coming on, and she loved them, knowing they were blood and bone of the plains country. In the new land it was a new race as she saw it. She was the first white mother, the first white woman, experienced, inventive and adaptable,

with much to give, much to teach, and much to pass along.

She had seen other children of hers marry to the country; but the marriage of Julie must have pleased her even more, because when her husband died while she was still in sturdy middle age, she made her home with Julie and into her care often came young Louis. From her he heard stories of their country and her life in it and hopes for it that only such a woman could tell. From her he imbibed the intense sense of a new race, well-launched and worthy.

Marie Ann lived to be nearly a hundred years old, to watch Jean Louis play a notable part to weld the people into coherence and give them group sense, and to know Louis in the next stages of that work after the death of Jean Louis, when he come home to take up almost where his father left off.

Thus in Louis Riel, grandson of Marie Ann Gaboury and her adventurous husband, and of Jean Baptiste Riel VI and his half-Chippewyan wife, were united four streams of adventurous blood, established for two generations in the old order of the prairie country in the days of the buffalo—an order which they themselves had created in isolation.

Chapter Two

The Church Calls

ONE of the earliest memories of the boy Louis was of hundreds of people cheering wildly, singing, firing off their guns, and bringing his father home in triumph like a conquering hero. That was in 1849 when he was four years old. It was several years before his father could explain to him all the meaning of their shouts "Commerce est libre", their cheers for the Metis as a people, and their celebration of Jean Louis himself.

The occasion for the din had been that four Metis had been brought before a Hudson's Bay Company court for the offence of selling their furs across the American border in a market where they could get four to five times as much as the Company paid for such goods, thereby violating the Company's laws which required sale to the Company; and that the judge had been overawed by a display of organized protest by several hundred Metis led by Jean Louis, in whose innate strength of character, superior education and linguistic ability in either French or English, there had been an increasing trust over the six or seven years he had been in the country. They instinctively knew that it was his careful teaching which was giving them intelligent coherence, and his instilled discipline which had enabled them to make this, their first, roughly-organized but unified demonstration, a successful one, and that this success would mean that henceforth there would be freedom to trade in profitable markets, without prosecution or persecution. It was they, the Metis, who had taken the lead for the whole settlement and the whole settlement would benefit.

Jean Louis had been in turn trapper, hunter, guide, freighter, Company employee, and finally farmer combined with occupation of miller. He was now on a small farm with a decent little house on the banks of the Red River in the parish of

St. Vital. The west had changed and developed since the days of his father's brief sojourn, and greater development was just ahead. Isolated settlements were forming and taking on aspects of permanence.



RED River community consisted of about six thousand population but was not yet aware of any basis of social unification. Moreover it was divided into quite clearly marked factions: Metis, the most numerous, who were the French-speaking descendants of many such adventurers as old Jean Baptiste, married either to Indian or half-breed wives and the issue of these intermarried; English-speaking natives, descendants of Hudson's Bay company officials mainly from Scotland or England, who had taken either Indian or half-breed wives and intermarried among themselves; and descendants of Selkirk settlers who had intermarried among themselves.

The Selkirk settlers had been brought into the country from Scotland and Ireland by a Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company for the express purpose of farming and their products were designed for bettering the diet of the Company's large number of employees; and their descendants continued at farming. The English speaking natives with their frequent close blood ties with past or present Company staffs also farmed to some extent; they had much the best opportunity to obtain the best lands with clear title. But the Metis disliked farming, often had difficulty in getting permanent title to the most desirable land, and had a natural passion for a free open life of buffalo hunting, trapping, guiding and freighting and hence it was they who first resented the tight monopoly maintained by the Company with rigor and efficiency. The Company of course owned the country, even the fish in the rivers and the wild animals of

the plains and had constitutional powers to govern at all levels. It was all but impossible for any man to live on the plains without at least the tolerance of the Company. Its powers included even sentence of death.

Language differences prevented a sense of coherence; and this was reinforced by differences of religion, although quite a number of English-speaking natives were descendants of Roman Catholic Company men from Scotland or England—but here the language barrier reinforced natural nation-of-origin prejudices. The Selkirk settlements were mainly Presbyterian.

Missionaries were now active over the country and priests had contrived a number of useful social institutions, particularly for education. But the acute Metis had already noted that an unobtrusive "screening" of priests had weeded out any who were not amenable to the tacit limitations put upon certain kinds of social activity tending to strengthen efforts such as those led by Jean Louis. He was already clearly aware that lay activity must be led by laymen of bold and independent mind and that help, if any, from the church must be surreptitious at most.

With the rapid pushing of railways westward on the American side of the border, radical alterations of American population inevitably followed. Jean Louis, observing that scene as a freighter and also as a man of education, was disturbed to see that as homesteaders rushed into the western states all people like the Metis in Red River were driven into the wilds, often with scant protection, or none, of their various vested interests. Social prejudice against "breeds" was a powerful factor in this wreckage, but inability to work together for concerted action made them pitifully helpless even to protect their elemental rights. They were deliberately degraded by the newcomers and they knew no way other than to accept either degradation or migration into new wilds.

He saw almost as clearly as the Company men that the acceleration

of what was beginning to be called progress would very soon bring great changes to his own plains country, and experience taught him that the Metis would be the most exposed group—others might possibly have some protection effected by pressure upon or co-operation with the Company.

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JEAN Louis, who had spent his youth in Quebec under British rule, had an intuitive understanding of the principles, underlying British institutions, and he had sufficient education to glimpse in 1849 what was then going on in the world: the extraordinary advance in the struggle of peoples for a share and voice in government. It was the moment when Kossuth in Hungary called compatriots to arms against Hapsburg oppression; when Garibaldi with visions of a united Italy, was making a landing and rushing toward success; when Prussia and other German states were winning their modern constitutions; when Czechs and Poles were in revolt and Young Irelanders were in arms; when the Liberal party in Canada was winning for provinces complete self-government; and Howe in Nova Scotia, a champion of local self-government, triumphed in spectacular fashion in an election full of storm and tempest. Jean Louis was shrewd enough to have the scent of this and to realize dimly that the Metis had some affinity with it all in their own complaints and efforts.

Progress did not have to take exactly the same shape on his plains, which were under a Company with a British charter, as it was taking in the United States. The French in Canada had not been ground under by British conquest; why should the Metis not have similar recognition, not as French but as Metis—the mixed ones with a double right as occupants of long-standing and as joint inheritors of the rights of the Indians who were indigenous to the country. The plains people would need a great leader; and the Metis would need one whom they could understand readily—it should be a Metis leader. The Metis must

prepare an educated man with a powerful voice.

As he watched his son Louis earning commendation for a conspicuously alert intelligence from his instructors in the primitive school to which he was sent, he yearned for Louis to be that future leader—so proud was he of the handsome boy.

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JEAN Louis' dreams for his son were supported by his fond observance of the growth of his child into a sturdy, healthy, thickset, well built, handsome boy with brilliant hazel eyes and fair hair slowly darkening to chestnut; a boy of whom his tutor, Father Lestance, one of the early teaching missionaries of the place reported "he is adept, quick to learn Latin" and other subjects. He had linguistic facility and not only freed his French of local vernacular but learned to speak English with fluency, mastered Cree quickly and out of his own interest picked up another Indian language with skill sufficient to interpret its ceremonies and outside intercourse.

While this precocious academic achievement was proceeding Louis' father himself saw to it that the boy became an expert horseman, equal to the best in a country where horsemanship was closer to circus stunting than to steeple chasing, and that he was a first rate shot. When he was proficient in these, Jean Louis took him several times with him on the buffalo hunt, which was a great co-operative community enterprize involving hundreds of men each bringing his particular skill into disciplined co-ordinated action under a strict traditional code of ethics as well as of concerted physical operations.

It did not worry Jean Louis that his son was a grave and earnest lad with no interest in frivolity and little taste for amusing play. As the oldest son, Louis took himself seriously in relation to the younger children, and he had a respect for his parents which amounted to veneration. It is related of him that he was so obedient that on one occasion when he was challenged to a fist fight in his school, he first

had to go home and ask his father's permission. That became a legend among the Metis; the solemnity with which he won the fight impressed even the boy who had given the challenge.

He was also a shy boy inclined to keep closely to his own family and not to make friendships outside his own circle of relatives. His display of polite refined manners, which was so conspicuous as to be a matter of comment by not only the Metis but English speaking observers, was intuitive and self-cultivated.

Others than Jean Louis noticed the boy's precocity. Father Lestance at the proper moment brought him to the attention of Bishop Tache, always on the watch for clever boys to be developed for the church. Father Lestance presently reported to the Bishop, "Riel gives promise of developing a vocation." Thereafter he was instructed with special care, and the upshot was that when he was 14 years of age the Bishop made definite arrangements for his education at Montreal College, one of the foremost educational institutions in Canada.

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RIEL was dejected that he himself could not provide the means for such an education, but he was sensible enough to see that, even with the prospect of future dedication to the church, it was his one hope to have Louis get the great education which he wanted him to have. Louis was not committed to the church at the outset; the determination of a vocation would depend upon Louis' progress and finally upon Louis' own feeling; but he would be under obligation to ecclesiastical sources of assistance.

Jean Louis was too honest a man to undercut the church and too democratic a man to try to exert undue influence upon his son. But over the years he had stage by stage imbued Louis with Metis racial consciousness, had discussed with him from time to time what he thought might be future Metis problems, and had hinted strongly at his ambitions for Louis to one day assume some responsibilities of leadership. The 1849 affair had had great conse-

quences but it had proved to be the climax of Jean Louis' leadership; time after time he had tried to do more such things in such ways—but always one thing or another thwarted success. And each such time he would explain and talk out his sense of failure to Louis.

The deLagimaudieres were elated at the prospect of a vocation for Louis; they had a simple, touching devotion to the church as an institution and firmly believed that office in it by any one of them would bring grace and renown to all of them. But Julie was depressed when one of her relatives reported a supernatural visitation in the night warning that father and son would never meet again. Such visitations, which rather frequently happened to the de Lagimadieres, one or another, were not dreams but unusual, mystical revelations, the imports of which few members of the community ever doubted.

Jean Louis himself was not much impressed by such a forewarning—of all such mystical visitations he would say "It is the way of the de Lagimaudieres" philosophically, neither deprecating nor confirming but merely accommodating himself to a conspicuous difference of temperament and religious feeling, of Riel's and his wife's family. But Louis' going meant an absence of six years with no intervening visit; he would be a grown man when he returned, probably a priest—perhaps he might not live among them again.

Jean Louis accompanied his son on the first stage of the journey, to St. Paul, Minnesota, where Louis would board a railway train for the trip to Montreal. They travelled by ox cart train, which Jean Louis had frugally committed to a commercial freight load. It was a slow and tedious caravan requiring a month, with camp stops at night. At these August evening campfires Jean Louis is said to have recapitulated to Louis all that he had tried to give him of inspiration over the years since he had had a first grasp of his father's lines of thought, and to have painted a vivid picture of what he foresaw of peril for the Metis.

SEVEN years ago in this territory of Minnesota which they were crossing, he said, there had been seven thousand white people. Now there were two hundred thousand, and all on land stolen from the Indians and from people like the Metis who had been ruthlessly pushed out and forced far away because there had been no time to educate them for adaptation. The Metis would need protection and education for perhaps twenty years—but they would not get it unless they asserted themselves and formulated plans for themselves and found a leader to watch over them.

He told of the petition which the business men of Toronto had sent that year to the British parliament asking cancellation of the privileges of the Hudson's Bay Company. Such men had no intention of respecting the Metis but would drive them out as ruthlessly as had been done elsewhere. Such classes of men had only contempt for Indians and all half-breeds, whether French or other. When they came stampeding into the country they would not want the native underfoot, would drive them far away into new country; and the Metis, unless well led, would give in, and move away, and then away again, until finally much later, there would be literally no place wherever for them to go.

When Louis had heard it all, he remarked that his tutors and benefactors expected him to prepare himself for the priesthood. Jean Louis said that he would of course be proud to have a son of his a priest, although no Riel in Canada had ever yet been a priest so far as he knew. It would delight his mother and gratify her whole family. He himself had never had a vocation and he did not quite understand vocations. But the boy must decide for himself and his decision must not be made lightly.

Father and son made an un-demonstrative farewell, and Louis, aged 14, boarded a railway train for the first time in his life. They never met again.

Chapter Three

The Great Decision

IN 1859 Montreal College was an important and successful religious institution for the education of French Canadians for the Church, but no tests, pledges or solemn promises were required or permitted at entrance, decisions of that sort being delayed until quite far on in the course. Less than half the students became priests, many turning to the professions or commerce, for which the course, although uniform for all, was regarded as a proper educational preparation. The student body was cosmopolitan and included boys and young men from all parts of Canada, the Maritime provinces, and the eastern states. Its instructors were among the best in all the colleges of the whole continent as to scholarship and personal reputation.

Louis was introduced to and well grounded in classical and modern literature, history and mathematics in the first years, and later in philosophy, science (as it was in that day), and oratory.

Discipline was strict; the students were seldom allowed beyond the precincts during the terms, and had contact with the outside world only by association with the large number of day pupils residing at their homes in Montreal. Newspapers were forbidden and the library was a dour department provided with books of spiritual inspiration. Students organizations were unknown and sports unthought of. All the movements of the resident students were under the direct control of the instructors.

Louis became at once a diligent student of the classics, showing a particular aptitude for Greek but also delighting in the orations of Cicero to the extent that he could repeat all in the original and often declaimed them in class with enthusiasm and extraordinary gestures. His scholarship was satisfac-

tory throughout, and he developed notably in eloquent oratory, to which he applied himself with enthusiasm.

In his first year he was very reserved, making no intimate friendships. But students of that day later recalled that in his second year he suddenly developed an intimacy with a fragile, invalid son of a family of Quebec City and that it had a morbid ending, the young man dying literally in Louis' arms. Without close friends thereafter, he nevertheless became popular and effected an escape from his extreme shyness, but never lost his ponderous seriousness. He was admired most for his generosity of spirit, his courteousness, and complete lack of any petty meanness.

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IN the beginning of his sixth year, at the age of 19, he felt ready to make decisions about his future. His spiritual instructors observed that he had a reverential, religious nature, delighted in ritual and ceremony, but that he had neither meekness, patience nor lowliness of spirit, and he did have an unruly temper. He was obsessed by politics and he sometimes not merely expressed unusual religious views but defended them with much stubbornness. He was humorless and more than ordinarily egotistical.

When he went into retreat, as was the formality of college, for contemplation and prayers about his high decision, it was felt by his instructors that he would give it full and serious consideration but they had little hope of the outcome.

He came to his decision in much nervous excitement and apparent mental perturbation; and he announced his decision in an earnest speech in which he referred to a visitation of the spirit of the real presence, an angelic mentor which had directed him. His decision was

not to enter the service of the church.

Almost immediately, word came of the death of his father. Letters required several weeks to pass and Louis was plunged in a despondency from which no one could arouse him for several weeks.

For the remainder of his sixth year, his close application to his academic studies was confused by consideration of practical problems of the care of his mother and her family, bereft in Red River, and by some preoccupation with what his own course should be should he return there.

He left college at the end of his sixth year, worked for a few weeks as student clerk in a law office but found it a practical impossibility to continue preparation for a legal career. He found employment in a warehouse and so earned money for his journey home, and the following year travelled to St. Paul, Minnesota. There his mother met him with news that a plague of grasshoppers had brought famine and destitution to Red River. The English-speaking breeds across the river had been hardest hit but the Metis were in a bad way too although they relied less on farming. Louis should stay in St. Paul, his mother thought. He found immediate employment as a store clerk and later as a teacher, and in that occupation remained in St. Paul for three years.

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THE Masson family of Terrebonne had provided the funds for Louis' education at Montreal College, and they extended their patronage to him in a personal way by having him as their guest for his vacations, a privilege which was almost as important to his full education as his academic studies.

They were prominent in all public affairs and entertained most of the important and celebrated people of the time in Lower Canada. Madame Masson was the daughter of Roderrick Mackenzie who was cousin of and co-explorer with Sir Alexander Mackenzie. Her son, Louis Francois Rodrique Masson, had preceded Louis at Montreal College after

which he engaged himself at law and writing and preparation for running for parliament. (He was later a member of the Macdonald cabinet and still later Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec.)

As Louis matured and gained a sense of social competence he had this opportunity to listen to many politicians of the time in social intercourse and to gain some insight into eastern affairs and personalities. It was a period of intense racial strife, and Louis observed that politicians of both Upper and Lower Canada were concerned with little but sectional antagonisms. George Brown of the Reform party was agitating for "rep by pop" which was a demand by Upper Canada, which had increased its population rapidly, for alteration in the Act of Union whereby the equality of numerical representation would be supplanted by numerical representation in proportion to numbers of population. Cartier of Quebec opposed this relentlessly in the fear that the French-Canadians would become a helpless minority in parliament and would lose their most cherished rights and become victims of exploitation.

Louis privately contrasted the history, present conditions and likely future of the French-Canadians in Lower Canada, protected by their numbers, vested interests, and constitutional safeguards, with the misfortunes and hazards of the Metis completely without rights of any kind, and without any political framework within which to operate, such poor vested interests as they had having no legal foundation whatever.

For instance Jean Louis had written him in one letter of a rumor he had heard in his freighting across the border, that a movement was afoot to persuade the American government to slaughter all the buffalo in one swoop as the readiest means of depriving American Indians of their means of existence and ridding homestead land of the great beasts. The buffalo, still in their millions, pastured in the almost empty Hudson's Bay Company territory in the Winter and roamed south of the border to pasture

on American plains in the Summer. The Americans had the opportunity to intercept the herds on their own territory, but a hunt on the scale of destruction envisaged would be so vast and require so many people in organized operation that private enterprise could hardly do the job without government approval. Louis knew that if such a thing happened, hundreds of Metis could not subsist, as they were not conditioned to adapt to such a sudden change in their economy.

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JEAN Louis also had not scrupled to write to Louis of everything that he considered significant in the changes going on in Red River. Late in 1858 he had written to Louis that a special committee of the British parliament had made a report encouraging the aspirations of Canada to annex portions of the northwest country for colonization—with a saving clause that such annexation must be with the consent of the Hudson's Bay Company. Who would protect the right of Red River people in such an event? The report made no reference whatever to them.

Later in 1859, Jean Louis wrote of the arrival in Red River of many new people, mostly from Upper Canada (Ontario), who were behaving like the land grabbers and speculators he had seen in operation in Minnesota. In 1860, he wrote that this element had set up a newspaper, the Nor' Wester, which was already making bitter attacks upon the Company and even upon its local officials because of their religion (some Company officials were Roman Catholics). These "Canadians" had the utmost audacity and bad manners. They behaved to all native people of any degree whatever of mixed blood with the utmost disdain and contempt, and it was impossible to be friendly or neighborly with them. The Nor' Wester openly printed that they were a "lower race" who must give way to progress. These people clanned together and defied the Company in all directions. They were buying up land from all who were foolish

enough to sell and often got it for scandalously low prices.

Jean Louis also wrote at length about a situation in which the strength of the Company and of these Canadians was tested: The Company, through its Council of Agriculture, submitted a petition for general signature, asking the British government for troops to protect the settlements from invasion by American Indians (who were being crowded out of the border states and might be expected to prefer the almost empty country to the north to being cooped up on reservations).

Immediately, the newly-arrived Canadians had offered a petition asking for a change of control of Company territories. Public meetings were held in great excitement and Jean Louis had himself taken to the platform to advise the Red River native people that Company rule had improved much in their own lifetimes and that it would be rash to abandon its protection before knowing anything about what would replace it. In the upshot, the Company's petition received an overwhelming majority of signatures; but also in the upshot the British government ignored both petitions equally. The Company's power was waning. It could not prevent the arrival of such as the insolent Canadians nor prevent their misbehaving. If annexation were achieved, who in Canada or Britain would secure justice for Red River people?

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TOWARD the end of his Montreal years Louis found an opportunity to engage Cartier in conversation and ventured to inquire of Cartier his opinions of possibilities. Cartier listened with politeness to this young student, a guest in the Masson home, but without interest in what the student said. He turned away without making any reply whatever. Louis perceived that he had barely heard of the Metis; had no interest whatever in their problems, no feeling that they had any connection with French-Canadians.

Others of whom Louis inquired, explained that Cartier would try to prevent annexation of the northwest

plains because it would rearrange the basis of parliamentary representation between Upper and Lower Canada, and because, as the rush of migrants into such new territory would be faster from Upper Canada than from Lower, Upper Canadians would gain both increased territory and increased political power. As to the Metis, Louis perceived that in Canada, they were dimly conceived

as half-savage, not unlike Indians in their way of living, and quite incapable of political understanding.

Louis realized with increased force the cogency of his father's idea that the Metis could look only to themselves and their own exertions for security. This and various other small incidents influenced him undoubtedly in his final decision not to enter the church.

Chapter Four

Snarl of Discord

LOUIS did not return to Red River until 1868 when he was 24 years of age. In his three years in St. Paul he noticed that many changes had occurred in Minnesota which had been transformed into a thickly settled country in one generation or less. Indians and half breeds had been driven out to a farther frontier—like the buffalo. But he observed that Red River was only slightly changed—the buffalo hunt had to be carried on farther west; there were more people — about 12,000; Red River was still four hundred miles from railway, telegraph and mails.

The "Canadians" whose arrival Jean Louis had reported six years before were increased in numbers and were collected, in a village near Fort Garry which they called Winnipeg. Their newspaper, the Nor' Wester, had become more insolent, more vicious in its scathing vituperation of all half-breeds and in particular of the Metis who had less Company protection. Inspired by what had gone on in Minnesota, they were determined to destroy the administration of the Hudson's Bay Company and challenged its charter and the legality of its holdings and those deriving from its ownership, and criticized its courts. On occasion the Nor' Wester went the length of criticizing the personal habits, even the religion of the highest Company official. Led by a Dr. Schultz from Upper Canada (Ontario) they kept the settlement in such a turmoil that Company courts were kept busy and confused.

But the older Red River factions had not united against them. The English-speaking breeds were perplexed, afraid of the Winnipeggers who respected no authority or rights of others, on the one hand; but were suspicious of the Metis, with whom they could not speak because of the language barrier, on the other hand. The Roman Catholic Church, which had a dominant

position because of the devotion of the more numerous Metis and because of a number of Company officials being Roman Catholic, was alarmed lest the invasion of more "Canadians" weaken its prestige and was anxious to avoid conflict as far as possible.

Riel observed that Company officials generally were in a mood of sullen indifference — their whole pattern of relation to higher authority had subtly altered. It was said that no attention was now given by the English directors of the Company to the reports and advisings of local Company officials, that a new policy by the Company directors in England was altogether confusing and incomprehensible, and the local officials were reacting with pique and dejection. He discovered that the shareholders owning the shares of the Company in Britain had sold out the stock of the Company to an entirely different group of British financiers, who seemed to have no interest in the old concerns of the Company but only in future financial operations with the stocks and shares.

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CONFEDERATION⁶⁷ of the four Canadian provinces had been completed the year before Louis' return, and the Canadian government was now in a position to take clear steps about annexation or other methods of acquiring control of Company territory. What delayed action was the process of negotiation with the new financiers who now owned the shares of the Company.

The Winnipeggers were certain that a transfer, which seemed imminent, would be followed by an aggressive policy of exploitation of which they could be the spearhead —and they privately proposed to make short work of all who obstructed their programs.

Into this snarl of discord, the Canadian government had lately sent John W. Snow, a road contractor, to build a road from the Lake of the Woods to Fort Garry.

The Canadian government was completely without constitutional right to send its contractors into the territory. John W. Snow was rough, tough and dishonest, and the local Company officials could get no firm policy from the directorate in Britain nor support for their administration of by-laws for peace and order. Snow's working crews had been recruited from deserters from the American armies of the Civil War, with a sprinkling of roistering day-laborers picked up from Upper Canada (Ontario).

Snow was poorly financed and he cheated the local population in all ways characteristic of such situations. He and his crews attempted to overawe the local people by coarse ridicule and brutal conduct. But his worst offence was his debauchery of the Indians and inducement of them while drunk to sign over large areas of their land to him. In the absence of any effective law enforcement the Metis feared that the whole country would come under his control.

With Snow on this road-making mission were two characters who were to have great effect on future developments although Louis knew nothing of one and only rumors of the other. Thomas Scott, of whom he knew nothing at that time, was one of the road workers picked up in Ontario. He was a turbulent young man, constantly in trouble of one kind or another.

The other character Riel did hear of: Charles Mair, a writer of ability who amused himself writing descriptions of primitive conditions of the people, which were published in the Toronto Globe and later copied into the Nor' Wester. These letters, read now, do not seem to be, to us, so brutal as they appeared to the Red River people. His descriptions of local society dwelt heavily on the inferiority of half breeds: "The English half-breed rises to the level of the father; the French half-breed sinks to the

level of the mother." "Most healthy people are married to half-breed women who have no coat of arms but a totem to look back to and make up for their deficiencies by biting the backs of their white sisters. The white sisters fall back on their whiteness while the husbands meet each other with desperate courtesy and hospitality with a view to filthy lucre in the background."

But columns of such writing, designed to titillate and amuse Toronto, when copied in the Nor' Wester created violent feeling such that Mair was refused hotel accommodation and threatened by crowds in the roads.

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RIEL was living quietly on his mother's farm, where many Metis went to him for private discussions of their acute problems. To them he predicted that the Company would sell and that Canada, the only possible purchaser, would buy when they both found terms they could agree upon.

He was given to fiery eloquence about the rights of the Metis, alternating with calm discussions of ways and means to assure the rights. The Metis audiences, ready to fight at a slighting remark in Mair's letters, were at first indifferent to Riel's references to abstract political rights.

To those who were about ready to pull up stakes and move to a farther frontier he pointed out that eventually they would be overtaken there, and urged that as resistance at some point was inevitable it had best be now, at the outset. But, he pointed out, resistance would be useless if it did not bring laws and rights and permanent constitutional framework. "When the Canadian people—I speak not of the Canadians you know in this settlement—get to understand, they will concede to the French Canadians the security which saved the French Canadians from doom," Riel said.

He explained that if they resisted and were overcome, then they could move to the wilds as they would do if they did not resist.

But he favored remaining and resisting to try to get a proper constitution and a government in which they would have a share.

Many of the more thoughtful Metis, of whom not all were uneducated, agreed with this and urged Riel to confer with English speaking natives of the settlement who stood in only slightly less danger. Riel attempted this but was not successful in persuading open co-operation. They were dissatisfied and alarmed, but declined positively to offer any obstruction to the coming of Canadian authority, much as they feared it.

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IN the Spring of 1869, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian government reached an agreement whereby the Company disposed of its rights to its lands, its trading monopoly, and its administrative rights for 300,000 pounds, retaining about five percent of the land, which was a vast area in itself and which was to be allocated, not in a block but in areas scattered so that settlement around its holdings would benefit its future values, certain mineral rights, certain exemptions from taxation and some other concessions. The agreement was subject to ratification by the British Parliament.

Riel discovered without much surprise but with much vexation that the agreement made no reference to the population living in the territory. Many residents had been established for two and three generations, and all had contributed much to the Company's enormous affluence. This was presumably to be a matter for the purchaser, the Canadian government, to arrange.

The next development was more threatening: at the session of 1869, the Canadian Parliament passed legislation providing an administration for Rupert's Land and the North West Territory by a Lieutenant-Governor, to be named by the Canadian government and to have absolute power over the area, or, in their exact words, "to make provision for the administration of justice and generally to make, ordain and establish all such laws

and institutions and ordinances as may be necessary for peace, order and good government."

This legislation implicitly denied all rights of citizenship to the residents of the country. The Canadian confederation thus took measures to operate the new acquisition as a Crown Colony of Canada, and itself assumed despotic rights more harsh than anything it itself had recently escaped from in its relations with Britain. Compared with this, what William Lyon Mackenzie and Papineau had rebelled against was well along the way towards responsible government. There was no provision for even a Consultative Council, elected by residents, or appointed to consult with them and advise on their behalf.

But Riel himself did not take the lead in making a protest. He was by now discouraged with the Metis and completely disheartened by the lack of response of the English-speaking population during the previous months, and he waited inactive on his mother's farm to see what the people themselves would do.

However, when the import of this legislation sifted through to the settlement, the people themselves went into a confused uproar.

Bishop Tache became so alarmed at the threatening atmosphere—loose mobs with no apparent leader of any intelligence—that he felt it advisable to leave for Ottawa and inform the authorities there of the amount of discontent. He conferred with Sir George Cartier, the French-Canadian leader and Minister of Militia in the Canadian government, who was in a position to sponsor the Metis inside the cabinet, had he so desired. Cartier was curt to the Bishop and said shortly that the cabinet knew more of the actual conditions than did the Bishop and that it was sending arms with the new governor.

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THE news that the Canadian government was preparing to send arms for an armed force with its governor enraged the plains people.

However, the agreement would

not be in effect and could not be implemented until it had formal ratification by the British Parliament. There appeared to be time to offer formal protests and take other such actions.

But immediately there arrived in the territory Colonel John Stoughton Dennis, an official of the Canadian government, with equipment and crew, under instructions of the Canadian government to make a survey of the country and prepare it for settlement. Legally he had no more right to enter the country than he would have had to go into the State of New York on a similar operation under Canadian authority.

Nominally, the Hudson's Bay Company officials still had legal authority, but without backing from their superiors in Britain they had neither workable authority nor any inclination to exercise it. Dennis negligently took this situation at its face value, and immediately became the guest of Dr. Schultz in Winnipeg — Dr. Schultz being the belligerent leader of the "Canadians," who with their offensive newspaper, the *Nor' Wester*, had been a thorn in the side of all elements, French, English and Company alike.

"I am afraid that Snow and Dennis fraternized too much with that fellow" (Dr. Schultz), wrote Sir John A. Macdonald, the Prime Minister, in a confidential letter to a friend, adding, "Schultz is a clever sort of man but exceedingly cantankerous and ill conditioned."

The people had tolerated Snow, who was building a road which would be of use to everybody and which did not invade many persons' private property. But here was a surveyor about to lay out the land for new settlement, who immediately fraternized with the hated Canadians and gave out the word that his survey would be by a block system. Now the Metis, having no roads, had used the frozen river in Winter, and certain established trails in Summer; and as they bought their land from the Company they had bought long narrow plots running away from the river

so that each plot owner would have access to the river or trails without crossing other people's property. Not only had their Company titles been vociferously challenged for ten years by the Winnipeggers, but now here was a surveyor who proposed not to respect any such lay-out.

Then the Canadian government named for its Lieutenant Governor with absolute powers, William McDougall, a bitterly anti-Catholic, anti-French politician when he had been a follower of George Brown, and a determined supporter of all that Schultz stood for when he was a member of the Macdonald government. And they supplied McDougall with a full, ready-made government composed entirely of men who had never seen the North West.

"I have never seen the people in such a state of restless excitement," wrote William McTavish, local Governor of the Company, to Bishop Tache.

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THE Metis first sought a leader in Pere Richot, one of the most widely trusted priests in the area. But he hesitated to embroil himself and the church and suggested that Louis Riel might be able to advise them.

When Louis was approached by a deputation he declined to give an immediate answer. He said he had some thought of returning to his teaching in St. Paul. He doubted the Metis would ever act together.

He believed the crisis would come with the attempt of the Lieutenant-Governor to enter the country without constitutional authority.

But while he hesitated and asked time to give thought to it all, his cousin, Andre Nault, arrived with news that Dennis' surveyors were trespassing upon his land. Riel instantly accompanied him to make a formal protest direct to the surveyors. Handsome, and neatly dressed as was his habit, Louis quietly and courteously addressed the crewmen of Dennis in perfect English to inform them that they trespassed and to ask them to retire. After a little argument the surveyors went away.

The news that old Jean Louis' son had handled this situation so effectively rallied the Metis to him; it also created consternation in Winnipeg — Who was this Louis Riel?

Colonel Dennis immediately demanded of Governor McTavish that Riel be disciplined: "In the excited condition of the half-breeds it might be unwise to impose harsh measures, but something sufficiently severe to prevent recurrence."

Louis seized the occasion to inquire of McTavish what the Company proposed to do to protect the Metis, and the Governor replied

that he could not interfere and really knew nothing about the situation.

"Then the authority of the Company is at an end?" asked Riel.

To that the Governor had no reply.

Louis saw a more favorable situation than he had ever anticipated. He knew what to do in a situation in which constituted government was abrogated. The people set up their own government, of the people by the people for the people. It was a civilized and accepted principle.

Chapter-Five

Riel's First Government

COLONEL Dennis had entered the territory as a civil servant of the Canadian government. Neither McTavish nor Riel nor most others knew that there was also present and observant, Hon. Joseph Howe, Secretary of State in the Macdonald government, tucked away for a secret fortnight in some hideaway. Had Howe known more about Louis Riel, subsequent events might have been different.

With McTavish's admission of the virtual abrogation of Company authority, Louis' path was clear in his own mind. He saw each step far ahead. What he conceived could not have been conceived by any illiterate, half-breed—or pure white. It could not have been conceived by anyone without a full and clear understanding of British political institutions and complete sympathy with them and faith in them.

The Metis must be led to create a government—to create it step by step to full and correct forms of and for responsibility; the factions must somehow be united to an indubitable majority; and that government must be free to negotiate with the Canadian Government the particular terms upon which these people would give up their "national sovereignty" to unite with the Canadian confederation.

How many years it might have been before the territories would have ceased to be a Crown Colony and become what Manitoba became within one year, without Louis Riel, is a fascinating speculation.

While Dennis fumed and raced hither and thither from priests to Company officials and Company courts without effect, Louis, with a reasonable approximation of parliamentary procedure in details, summoned his Metis and had them organize a National Committee to take the first hasty steps. He ex-

plained to them — so lucidly that they understood quickly—that the first necessity was to prevent the entry of Lieutenant-Governor McDougall and his ready-made government, and to do this in such manner that if physical force were necessary it must appear justified and correct procedure—not the force of a mob. He emphasized that until the British government had ratified the agreement of sale McDougall had no constitutional authority to enter or to govern. He explained that a people without a government had a right to form one for themselves by electoral process, and to act through such a government.

On the authority of their National Committee they would take steps to obstruct the entry of McDougall, by constructing and manning a barrier across the trail at a strategic point south of Fort Garry commanding every entrance into the settlement, and defend it with a small force of men led by Ambrose Lepine—a man of parts. When the assembled Metis finally agreed with the wisdom of this, they proceeded to elect officers. Louis refused the Presidency for a reason which appears to have been his sense of youth—he was 24. He accepted the office of Secretary and like many successful secretaries acted as if it were the entire organization—unobtrusively; preserving all formalities.

He saw to it that the course of action proposed was well advertised, and himself gave the details to a spy of the Winnipeggers who appeared at the barrier next day.

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DENNIS and Schultz sprang into action, by demanding a session of the Council of Assinabola, a body organized by the Company some years before to advise the Governor and occasionally to assist him through tough spots. Its membership included all the more im-

portant Company officials, some leading settlers, and the professional personnel of the community such as Bishops of both churches. Riel and Bruce, the President of the National committee, were invited to attend, which they did with pleasure on the part of Riel. It was Riel's first chance to test his mettle beyond his own following. In a debate which lasted from 10 in the morning until 7 in the evening, Riel was on his feet most of the time meeting attacks from every quarter; orating with easy fluency upon all manner of criticisms and counter proposals. Bruce smoked his pipe in silence the entire day.

When Riel finally left, the members of the Council of Assinaboia were without a mode of further action. They feebly suggested to a Metis named Dease who was a member and who hated all Riels bitterly, when he insisted that "the more intelligent Metis" were not behind Riel, that he organize a party of "the more intelligent" to proceed to the seat of trouble and convert the less intelligent. Dease accepted the challenge and the upshot was that thirty of the eighty who went with him to do the job joined Riel before the conference was over.

While this was transpiring, word spread that Hon. Joseph Howe, at a private party in Winnipeg had made the forecast that the Canadian government would not bring the agreement before the British parliament for ratification until McDougall was successfully established in the country.

Whereupon, Howe vanished.

McDougall, with his retinue and chattels had travelled by rail to St. Paul and by caravan the 400 miles from St. Paul to Red River. His carts and carriages were nearing the border.

Howe, who had left the settlement two days before the completion of the barrier, met McDougall two days out from Pembina in United States, in a howling blizzard. Their conversation was brief.

McDougall later complained to Parliament that Howe failed to

warn him of what was ahead; Howe replied that he had been dazzled by the grandeur of McDougall's equipage. "McDougall preferred to go into the country in state. If anyone had seen his cavalcade of carriages, the number of women and children in his train, it would not be wondered at that I did not stop. He went out there like a great satrap, with an amount of following, a grandeur of equipage, a display of pomp that was enough to tempt the cupidity of half the half-breeds in the country." McDougall in his bitterness said that Howe had been "bibulously inclined" in Red River.

Riel was given no opportunity to see Howe who had gone before Riel knew of his presence. But a gain to Riel was the prediction that there was time to create a government; and in the process of that government's negotiations he believed that the sense of justice of the Canadian people could be appealed to. His faith was optimistic.

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LOUIS posted a Metis courier at Pembina just over the border with this note for McDougall:

Monsieur—Le Comite Nationale des Metis de la Riviere Rouge, intime a Monsieur W. McDougall l'ordre de ne pas entrer sur le Territoire du Nord Ouest sans une Permission speciale de ce Comite.

Pas Ordre du President,
John Bruce,

Louis Riel, Secretaire,

Date a St. Norbert, Riviere Rouge,
Ce 21e jour d'Octobre, 1869.

McDougall disdained this polite intimation and pushed across the border, but halted at a message from the Council of Assinaboia. His secretary, whose uncle had been the first Bishop in the settlement, went ahead and decided to accept an invitation given at the barrier to attend church service. Captain Cameron, the head of the military guard of McDougall's outfit, approached the barrier, peered through his monocle, and harshly ordered: "Take down that blawsted fence." The

Metis were amused, then and for the rest of the season — it became their pet joke. They politely escorted him back to the boundary.

While McDougall waited in discomfort, Colonel Dennis investigated the arms and equipment of the community. He was observed to be taking an inventory of the armory of Fort Garry. Riel ordered his men from the barrier to Fort Garry and they took physical possession of the Fort, its cannon, rifles and ammunition, with only formal opposition from Company officials. It was the only fortified building in the community and was the administrative headquarters of the Company and the storehouse and distribution office of all goods going into the whole Northwest. He thereby deprived Colonel Dennis of comfortable quarters for troops and ample supplies to feed them—and acquired those for the Metis. He also acquired the tangible seat of government. When Dennis put up a cry of collusion with Company officials, Riel did not deny it—although it was not true. He was not excited; he had a clear picture in his mind.

He also made an appraisal of the stores, officially commandeered goods for his troops on duty to protect the Fort, and proceeded to police the community—filling a gap in the Company's recent functions.

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A ST. PAUL newspaper correspondent observing developments wrote: "The discipline is excellent, and is not surpassed by any troops I ever saw. No soldier is permitted to take a drop of spirits." The Metis who were disciplined to the huge buffalo hunts were not a wild rabble.

He took another step in the amplification of a democratic government. According to the laws of nations, he told them, a people without any form of government were right to create one for themselves, but it should be a majority government.

In the name of the National Committee he issued this invitation to the English speaking natives:

"The President and Representatives of the French-speaking population of Rupert's Land in Council—the invaders of our rights now being expelled—already aware of your sympathy, do extend the hand of friendship to you, our friendly fellow inhabitants, and in doing so invite you to send twelve representatives, in order to found one body with the above council—the French speaking population—consisting of twelve members, to consider the present political state of this country, and to adopt such measures as may be deemed best for the future welfare of the same.

"A meeting of the above council will be held in the Court House at Fort Garry, on Tuesday, Nov. 16th, at which the representatives will attend.

By order of the President,
Louis Riel, Secretary.

Winnipeg, Nov. 6, 1869."

Meantime McDougall, who had camped in the Lower Fort near the border from Saturday until Tuesday, was warned by the Metis to leave the country and was provided an escort across the border. Being committed to inaction until he should be advised by his friends inside Red River, he sat in camp in United States and employed his time writing lengthy reports to the Canadian government, and in a heated correspondence with Governor McTavish accusing him of doing nothing to expedite his entry. McTavish replied that he had no official instructions and knew of no transfer of authority.

Riel, observing that Winnipeg was hostile to his proposals to the English-speaking people, went energetically to work to back up his invitation to the native English-speaking people by personal conferences with them to forward their selection of representatives.

On the Tuesday, at the Court House, the Convention opened with representatives from every parish in the settlement, and began functioning smoothly as planned.

MATTERS were well underway. When suddenly a Company official handed in a "proclamation" from Governor McTavish. Not knowing what was in it, and suspicious, Riel obstructed its reading all that day, on the argument that the company as governing body was defunct. He impressed his points, but it created a confusion and restlessness which retarded business.

He read of the contents of the proclamation in the newspaper, the Nor' Wester, that evening—a special edition. It was not anything as dangerous as he had feared, a mild adjuration by McTavish that those engaged disperse and withdraw to their habitations. It said little about governments, past or present, and nothing of future.

The proclamation was read next day, and to Riel's surprise led to a rambling controversy which simmered all day and prevented progress. The name of the Company still implied power in the minds of many English-speaking people who clung to its possibilities of protection. Actually McTavish had been reluctant to issue it, and had resisted the demands upon him by McDougall and Dennis and others; he had given in but had written McDougall that he was issuing it "more in deference to your opinion than from any expectations of favorable results."

Riel made a show of his authority and power by having his National Committee police arrest McTavish and several other officials for inquiry into the issuance of the document.

The Convention adjourned at the end of the second day and took recess because the Company judge required the use of the courthouse for the trial of Thomas Scott and three other of Snow's employees, on a

charge laid by Snow. This was a matter of internal affairs of Snow's outfit, and the courthouse was made available. Scott and his three associates in a dispute with Snow about unpaid wages had assaulted him and were about to throw him over the bank into the river when passers-by intervened and prevented the tragedy. It was a noisy trial in which Scott expressed disdain of the court and made some commotion. Each was fined five pounds—a heavy fine for the time, place, and state of currency. "We should have ducked the old devil and got our money's worth," Scott roared arrogantly.

During the recess the Schultz followers energetically circulated reports that Riel was a Fenian, a traitor who planned to set up a republic, and numerous other ingenious inventions in an effort to alienate the English-speaking representatives.

When the convention resumed, the delegates were confused, but were surprised by the moderation of Riel's actual proposals. However he discovered that he was going a bit too fast, losing his temper in frustration and excitement, and arranged a postponement until December 1st.

The McTavish proclamation did not seriously weaken his growing prestige; but the confusion it caused made the delay, and the delay was to prove serious. Had they achieved unity at precisely that moment when McDougall was sitting in his camp over the border, an early settlement of most of the difficulties might have been possible.

The half success of this proclamation fired the imagination of the supporters of Schultz and Dennis, and more was to follow.

Chapter Six

False Proclamation

IN the name of "Her Majesty, Victoria by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith," from Pembina in the United States, December 1st, 1869, William McDougall, representative of the Canadian government as Lieutenant-Governor of Rupert's Land and North West Territories, issued a solemn proclamation announcing the transfer of Rupert's Land and North West Territories to the Canadian government.

It was a forgery. It bore dazzling seals and had the look of authenticity but it was altogether spurious. It had been manufactured in Winnipeg and supplied to McDougall at his camp over the border. It was put into circulation immediately, throughout the Red Deer settlement.

Ten days later, William McDougall, appointee of the Canadian government, and four members of the cabinet appointed by the Canadian government for their administration of their new Crown Colony of Canada, set out from McDougall's camp in Pembina and struggled in darkness and storm across the boundary into Hudson's Bay Company territory. There, with his feet firmly planted on British soil, McDougall drew forth the forged document and recited it aloud in such a tumult of blizzard that his colleagues could not hear his voice.

This brief expedition by night across the American border into British country, was McDougall's only official activity on British soil—otherwise he kept to his camp over the border until receipt of a letter from Prime Minister MacDonald criticizing him for issuing a false document in the name of the Queen, after which he faced his cavalcade of carts and carriages toward St. Paul, the railway, and home.

AT approximately the time that McDougall was shouting the forged name of his Queen to the Red River blizzard, the newspapers of eastern Canada reported that the government of Canada would not accept transfer from Hudson's Bay Company of their territories until peace had been restored in the area.

The proclamation had been timed to appear when the delegates were reassembling in Fort Garry for their adjourned session at the Court House. However Louis might suspect the authenticity of the document he could get no verification or contradiction for at least two weeks, because the nearest railway and telegraph line were at least six days distant.

Louis was in committee that morning and meanwhile copies of the document fluttered in the amazed hands of the delegates. Louis first heard of it when an English-speaking delegate handed him a copy with the explanation that Colonel Dennis had brought it to Fort Garry.

"Now, more than ever before it is necessary that we should be cool," Louis said. "We have always believed that we were British subjects and loyal to Queen and country. But I cannot believe that this proclamation is genuine. I cannot bring myself to believe that the English authorities would so ignore the right of the people, without even consulting them. This is what has been done if this proclamation is genuine. I doubt it."

The session of delegates examined in detail and discussed those parts which confirmed the absolute despotic authority of the new control, with no provision for even an advisory elected body. Debate was excited and confused.

At the afternoon session, Riel offered and pressed through a Bill of Rights which the National Com-

mittee had already adopted — his strategy was to use this as the basis of future negotiation with the Canadian government. The delegates noticed that it provided for an elected legislature with guaranteed powers protecting it from intrusion by the executive chosen by Canada and also from intrusion by the Canadian government or parliament; that it protected local customs and privileges, guaranteed both languages in courts and legislature. Except for a few minor clauses it seemed practicable and they adopted it.

But by next day Louis discovered that the followers of Dennis and Schultz and the Nor' Wester were rapidly working the community into an uproar. Even many Metis were upset to think that it was not just the Canadian government they were opposing, but the Great Queen herself—which was a very serious matter. A public meeting of Metis that evening considered sending their own separate delegates to McDougall; but their debate was interrupted by the tumult of a Winnipeg crowd setting out for the Stone Fort to join the Dennis Army.

Not till then had Louis heard of the Dennis army, or realized the full significance of the proclamation.

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FOLLOWING the spurious "Queen's proclamation" by a day, McDougall issued a second proclamation in his own official right, citing unlawful assembly, disturbance of the peace, etc., and appointing Colonel Dennis as the "Conservator of Peace, with full authority to attack, arrest, disarm or disperse . . . assault, fire upon, pull down, or break into any fort, house, stronghold or any other place."

The Conservator of Peace instantly went into activity and rushed through the settlement like a cyclone to enlist and organize an army. His own diary establishes his zeal in such details as:

"Arrived at Hallett's at 5 a.m.

Read them my commission (which was not issued until the following day) . . . Arranged for reading of the Proclamation at the Convention . . . Conferred with Schultz about security of Canadians . . . Made manuscript copies of (something not described) and had them delivered . . . Learned that Major Boulton had enrolled men and drilled them . . . Learned that 80 Metis soldiers were ready to desert and join Dennis Army . . . Captured the Hudson's Bay Company Stone Fort (the lower fort near the boundary) without meeting opposition . . . Organized guard made up of Indians to protect Fort," and so on. Dennis' plan was to recruit troops from the English-speaking people and the anti-Metis Indians (related by marriage to English-speaking families) and put a stop to Riel's activities by force. One achievement was that Bruce, President of the National Committee, in the turmoil sold out to Schultz.

Louis presently discovered that the English-speaking natives were not rallying to Dennis nor were influenced much by the uproar, they told him that they were deciding among themselves not to fight against the Metis unless in self-defence. Riel gave strictest orders to his Metis following that under no circumstances, aggravation or irritation, should the Metis be aggressive in any matter whatever. He knew he could rely on Ambrose Lepine to enforce his discipline.

Prime Minister Macdonald, writing to a friend later, described Dennis' actions as a "bit of frenzy."

More alarming than anything else was the bargain Dennis made with a notorious half-breed to incite the Indians to take the war-path, an agreement which caused the government an amount of trouble later on.

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WHEN the Winnipeg Canadians learned that the English-speaking natives had generally decided not to oppose the Metis unless in self-defence and that Riel had im-

posed a discipline upon his own following which they knew from experience would get respect, a gang of them, against the advice and instructions of Dennis and entirely on their own responsibility barricaded themselves in the stout warehouse of Dr. Schultz, putting out the rumor that they were guarding government stores of great importance, and organized various forms of incitement to tempt Metis attack of their stronghold.

The entire community was in fevered excitement; with peaceful families tackled by Dennis to provide recruits; with suspicion of that Proclamation from the Queen; with Metis men dodging about in visibly difficult self-restraint but carrying all the arms they owned; with Indians drifting in toward the outskirts and assembling there in their tepees; with the Schultz gang tossing insults to passers by; and with the consciousness of McDougall sitting in camp across the border.

When the incitements of the Schultz warehouse gang mounted to a point where it could no longer be borne by the Metis with self-respect, Louis organized an outlet for his men by himself leading a picked group for a counter challenge, a parade before the "stronghold." His men made grimaces at the Canadians within and challenged them to come out and fight it out man to man. Louis himself drew out Dennis' Call to Arms, quoted bits of it, tore it to pieces and stamped on it. And as he expected nothing came of it. His Metis marched home triumphant—and satisfied.

Next day a rumor, the source of which no one could trace, began to be generally accepted that something was wrong about that Queen's Proclamation. The source seemed to be the Canadian Winnipeggers themselves—they were so proud of their activity that they could not refrain from boasting of their own cleverness. Dennis, who later declared with a straight face that he did not know the proclamation was bogus, made an effort to bolster it up; he challenged the Metis to a one-sided test of its authenticity—Company Judge Black should pro-

nounce upon it. Judge Black reported that it "looked" honest enough. But that did not clear up the mounting and spreading doubt.

By Sunday, excitement reached a climax. Major Boulton, second in command to Dennis, reported "The town is full of Frenchmen. They kept parading about, and kept us on the alert all night."

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A NUMBER of leading citizens who had not lost their sanity realized that a clash must come soon if Dennis persisted in his house-to-house canvass for volunteer troops. On Monday they waited on the Conservator of Peace to complain about his course. "Civil war is altogether too dear a price to pay for anything wanted on either side." Dennis replied curtly that it was his "duty not to relax preparations." The Anglican Bishop of Rupert's Land conferred with Governor McTavish and together they wrote Dennis appealing to him to give up any idea of attacking Fort Garry and also "any idea of seizing by stealth any of the rebels."

Thus rebuked, Dennis despatched a leading citizen to try to arrange an interview with Riel. The leading citizen used his discretion, Riel never got the message, and Dennis began to climb down.

Riel decided to remove what he saw to be the main cause of irritation by capturing the Schultz gang; the Metis surrounded the house, gave the gang fifteen minutes to surrender, and then packed the whole 45 of them, Dr. Schultz and Thomas Scott among them, to the barracks and put them under guard.

Dennis was in no peaceful mood when he announced to McDougall that he had abandoned recruiting, later in the week. "If the people were willing they could put down the half-breeds," he wrote to McDougall. "But they won't do it. The fact is that they are cowards, one and all of them. Although they are my countrymen, I must speak the truth about them."

Dennis joined McDougall at Pembina December 11th. As a last hope

McDougall sent a letter to Riel—a bombastic, pompous, insulting sort of letter, which he cautioned Riel to keep secret—inviting him to a secret interview and warning him that if he (McDougall) should return to Canada without some understanding a military governor would succeed him. If Riel ever received the letter he made no reply.

McDougall was becoming unpopular in Pembina. The Pembina Metis (Americans) were angered because they discovered that he was talking to stray Indians at his camp and trying to bring them into war. The Pembina Metis told McDougall they would kill him if their Indians went on the war path.

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THE complex events occurring in Red River while Lieutenant-Governor McDougall and his cavalcade sat across the American border got a one-sided airing in the Canadian Parliament when McDougall returned there. He kept his seat in Parliament and pursued a bitter quarrel with Howe, Secretary of State in the Macdonald government, to whom he addressed a series of vituperative open letters. He accused Howe of being "the chief abetter, if not the chief instigator of the Red River trouble." He spoke of "the insurrection of foreign Jesuits, foreign adventurers,

Canadian outlaws, Hudson's Bay Company employees and their ignorant dupes — the poor half-breeds." He declared that the Hudson's Bay Company officials were only loyal to St. Boniface (Roman Catholic church) and its agents.

He said that Howe told friends in the United States that the North West belonged naturally, geographically and commercially to the United States.

He referred to Riel's forces as "a small minority, the very scum of the vermiform society led by a few priests, agents and American citizens." He spoke of the "armed uprising of a Roman Catholic bishop and a few of his parishioners" and of "your (Howe's) Jesuit allies with their treacherous doctrine, their blood-stained hands and their indiscriminate hostilities to human progress in whatever form."

Altogether, young Canada's attempt to attach to itself a Crown Colony under a despotic governor and an Ottawa-made cabinet had not done so well so far.

How such a Crown Colony might have developed—as it might have had an opportunity to develop without Louis Riel—remained a speculation. Red River people did the first speculating—and rejected the nightmare.

Chapter Seven

Provisional Government

AFTER the departure of McDougall, December 18, 1869, Louis was in control of Red River, his leadership generally acknowledged by both French and English speaking natives. He was now 25 years old. Dennis, the over-active civil servant, had departed; and Dr. Schultz and 44 of his over-ardent following were locked up in Fort Garry.

With the National Committee as the legislative organization, and his Bill of Rights the constitutional framework already accepted by the two most numerous factions of the country, Louis could see considerable progress as the achievement of three week.

The next steps were as rapidly accomplished: He reorganized the National Committee, which was essential because the first president had defected to the enemy pusillanimously and he and certain other broken reeds must be replaced. He reduced his armed following to strength appropriate to peace time, the released men taking their hunting rifles off to more appropriate operations. A bothering problem of finance was temporarily solved by the Committee borrowing £1,090 from the vaults of the Hudson's Bay Company against the mild formal protest of the Company officials. He got himself a press by forced purchase of the plant of the Nor' Wester, and used the presses to issue a gazette.

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In the reorganization of the National Committee Louis was obliged to assume the nominal as well as the actual Presidency. For his former post of Secretary young O'Donoghue had the best scholarly equipment—he was a brilliant young Fenian and republican, a student for the priesthood who had abandoned aspirations for the church, and because O'Donoghue could keep accounts he was also posted as treasurer.

For Secretary of the Council —

keeper of records—Louis Schmidt, a young Metis who had been selected along with Louis for eastern education, had ample qualifications. For Adjutant General, Ambrose Lepine, a lay instructor in one of the local church schools, a man of integrity and steady poise, visibly the ablest military disciplinarian in the community, was brilliant. The Committee's choices had to be confined to those who were literate, and to the editorship of the official news gazette was assigned H. N. Robinson, a not too satisfactory choice as Robinson held strong but unpopular views in favor of annexation of the settlement to the United States—a matter upon which he was in profound disagreement with Louis Riel.

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HARDLY had the infant Provisional Government got set in its new order when three illustrious visitors arrived on three successive days. These were Dr. Charles Tupper, Conservative member of the Canadian Parliament, Vicar General Thibault, commissioned by the Canadian government, and Donald A. Smith, better known to Canada as Lord Strathcona, who reported as Chief Officer of the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada, come to replace Governor McTavish.

It is not now apparent just how clearly Louis realized that the decision of the Canadian government not to accept transfer of the territory from the Company until Red River was pacified placed the Company as an obstruction directly across his path toward negotiations by a Red River government with the Canadian government—but he was to behave as if he had also foreseen that.

Tupper, later Sir Charles, then a private member of parliament, came on a personal errand—to find some lost property of his daughter, wife of monocolled Captain Cameron of the "blawsted fence" episode. Tupper was the Conservative leader in

Nova Scotia, and close political friend of Macdonald's. He met Louis, who courteously promised help in his search and soon located the property and had it restored to him. They had little other conversation but Tupper, who was tactful, adroit, and interested, obtained a great deal of information in other ways.

Tupper had a long talk with Pere Richot, from whom he learned the capacity, strength and aspiration of the Metis.

But it was perhaps from Riel's sister, a nun teaching in St. Norbert Convent, that he obtained his clearest insight into Louis' character and aims. He happened to lodge in the Convent, and he was so much impressed by this girl's intelligence and good sense that he formed a firm friendship and carried on an interesting correspondence with her until her death about thirty years later.

Both the evidence collected and Tupper's private estimate of the situation were communicated at once to Macdonald who, later, writing to Rose, said "Dr. Tupper was in the country for about two days, and he did more good than anyone else who has hitherto gone there."

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VICAR General Thibault, commissioned to make a formal inquiry into the Red River situation, had been a priest in the settlement, highly respected by the Metis. He informed Riel that Colonel de Saleberry, a military man of good repute throughout Canada, was also a member of his commission but had remained at Pembina until it was learned whether the Commission would be welcome. Riel at once sent for de Saleberry and he arrived in ten days.

When Riel read their credentials he was disappointed that they had been given no power to take action of any kind, and he surmised that they had been sent to cool the enthusiasm of the Metis. Their letter of information, drawn up by Howe, the Secretary of State, read like one of Howe's more youthful orations. They were not to fail "to direct the attention of the mixed society of the Settlement that men in Canada,

of all origins, creeds and complexions, stand upon one broad footing of perfect equality and such is patent to all the world", and that "there was no absurd idea that the settlers of Red River were to be deprived of municipal or political rights, although some training may be necessary before the colony comes into full political rights, and that "the brightest page in Canada's history is that which tells of Canada's treatment of the Indians". He wrote with some scorn for the "folly of the indiscretion of persons who have assumed to represent the Dominion and speak in its name" but not a word of authorization for the Commission to negotiate or come to even tentative agreements with the natives of the Red River settlement.

Thibault suggested that the settlement should send representatives to Ottawa to confer with the Canadian government. The suggestion instantly gratified Riel, and to de Saleberry he said "Do not be in a hurry to leave. I think of charging you with a commission which cannot but be agreeable to you".

Thibault reported that "the outlook was very promising . . . when an unlooked for occurrence not only threw back matters but caused me for some time to lose all hope."

The "unlooked for occurrence" was Donald Smith.

Smith came as a special Commissioner with limited powers of negotiation which he was authorized to use at his discretion, from Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald. But he said nothing of this immediately.

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DONALD A. Smith arrived at Fort Garry December 27. He purported to be the Chief Officer of the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada, come to relieve William McTavish, resident Governor at Fort Garry, then very ill. Smith had been employed by the Company in Canada from his early youth and knew the ramifications of the Company and the resources of the country as did no other man.

What neither Louis nor any other person in Red River knew was that

he felt himself at that moment to be standing at the threshold of dazzling financial prospects with almost unlimited control of a revised Company promising to be more prosperous in the future than it had ever been in the past.

The British shareholders of the Company who saw in the proposals annexation by or sale to Canada of the territory, felt gloomy of the Company's future and public opinion in Britain was such that the shares were heavily depressed on the stock market, a situation in which Smith had personally bought very heavily and thereby won control through the directorate or policy for the future.

He had been the prime manipulator of the terms of sale to Canada, and it was his intimate knowledge of the resources and their whereabouts which had framed the terms of sale so that the Company would retain immense tracts of land, mineral rights, exemptions from taxation, and so on. There had been hard bargaining on both sides; but Smith had the best information and got virtually what he knew would be most useful for the profits of the Company in the far future.

He was a cold, unemotional master of business and finance, at the prime of life — 50 years old. In his early days in the Company, he had followed the usual pattern of domestic arrangements of employees — had chosen a wife from among the women of mixed blood, and so had ramified family connections with Company personnel throughout the Company's domain.

This, hard, powerful man was later to be Lord Strathcona and Glencoe, the first Canadian to be a peer of the British realm, with title ranking above that of any other Canadian, a dominant figure in international finance, and potent in politics. All that now stood between him and the immediate realization of his colossal ambition — what made the moment a crisis for him — was Louis Riel, aged 25, recently returned from a ten-year absence and not yet well known to his own people, without an in-

fluential backer or experienced adviser in the whole world — and without a well wisher outside Red River.

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THE activity of the organized Metis had interrupted the completion of the sale agreement between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian government. Prime Minister Macdonald, finding himself in a tight spot by the failure of his representative McDougall, had jockeyed himself out of the jam by "passing the buck" to the Company — it was its responsibility to deliver the land with the natives upon it pacified and docile. Macdonald had pointed to McDougall's reports that the local officials of the Company were in collusion with Riel.

Smith, preparing to go himself to the plains, had solicited that the Prime Minister appoint him Lieutenant-Governor and allocate to him a military force to be commanded by Colonel Wolseley, a British officer seeking a military career in Canada.

Macdonald had rejected both proposals. It was impractical to replace McDougall at the moment; and as Smith was going to plains for pacification, an armed escort would cause him to be looked upon, Macdonald had said, "as carrying an olive branch in one hand and a revolver in the other." He had compromised by giving Smith a special commission, with limited powers of negotiation. Smith had asked that no publicity be given to this until he felt the moment opportune; and Macdonald had agreed that he should employ the credentials at his discretion.

Checked in his first plan to overawe Red River with armed force, Smith had worked out a different plan on his way to St. Paul. He was not greatly concerned about how peace was achieved and still believed that the quickest way to overcome opposition was to overcome the Metis by the shortest method with no nonsense about native rights. But as frontal attack was not permitted, he would disintegrate op-

position by ways in which he was experienced and expert. He had a triple-barrelled gun — the commercial power of the Company among the settlers, all of whom were in one way or another under obligation to it; misrepresentation of the scope of his authorization; and funds for bribery over an area where he exactly knew the weak spots. (Later he was to bill the Canadian government for £500 so used).

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SSMITH carefully put his letters of Commission in safety at St. Paul and left all other such papers behind him.

When he arrived at Fort Garry, Riel met him most courteously, introduced him to the members of the Executive Council and asked formally about his mission. Smith replied that he was on business for the Company. At Riel's insistence he acknowledged the Provisional Government, and gave a pledge that he would take no steps to upset that government. He accepted escort to his apartments at the Fort. For the time being, Riel, reassured, lost sight of him.

Immediately Smith set about a series of secret visits with the most influential personages in the settlement and through them set afloat statements of the reliability of the liberal intentions of the Canadian government and also to these persons he asserted that he had full powers of negotiation from the Canadian government. News of this had immediate influence not only

upon the English-speaking people but also upon numerous Metis. Whereupon when this had had time to work he embarked upon extensive bribery. (The Metis whose traditions, are usually correct said that he at one point tried to bribe Riel). About this matter of other bribery there can be no doubt, as he himself later referred to it before parliament with cold candor.

Rapid Metis defections even within the Provisional Government and the Executive Council, perplexed Riel and he placed Smith under arrest. Smith not only admitted what he had done but by that time he felt himself strong enough already to assume control and demanded that his secretary be sent to St. Paul for his credentials from Macdonald, and that Riel summon a mass meeting to which Smith might read the documents, explain them and generally advise the settlers.

Riel acceded. But he had heard of Smith's claims that he had full power to negotiate and settle everything and he could not imagine why in that case Smith had not presented his credentials immediately. He decided to intercept the returning secretary, seize the documents and examine them before the mass meeting—an attempt which failed and created suspicion of Riel among still more of his own following.

Riel was wrought into great excitement which he could not immediately control—he had never before encountered a personality like Smith's, exuding baleful power, impenetrable, a stone-cold puzzle.

Chapter Eight

A Battle of Wits

THE mass meeting required by Smith had been fixed for January 19. It was a meeting which had no parallel in the history of Canada. It was held out of doors, because no building adequate in the middle of an unusually severe winter with the thermometer at 20 degrees below zero was available. Nearly all males in the settlement or within travelling distance attended and were collected early, long before proceedings commenced.

Smith's stake was concrete and colossal. A careful selection of the richest holdings of land and minerals in a quarter of a continent; Riel's was abstract and indeterminate: The human welfare of obscure poor people entirely exposed, without allies, and cut into factions. Both were about equally familiar with the character of the people, but Smith's knowledge of the audience was fully conscious and fully experienced as to the weaknesses of their natures collectively and also in many cases individually, and Riel's was abstract and indeterminate.

The debate, as it turned out, lasted two days.

Riel, controlling an almost breaking inner excitement of doubt and fear under a facade of calm assurance, nominated for chairman a highly respected English-speaking half-breed, and himself acted as interpreter, translating the long, formally-worded documents of Smith into equivalent French—and on the second day, when some Indians arrived, into Cree.

Smith made his first test of the people by demanding that the Metis flag be lowered and the Metis put aside their arms.

There has always been confusion about matters of flag in Red River troubles. The British flag did not exist in Red River—what was used was a Hudson's Bay Company flag, the British Jack overprinted with

the Company's name. When Riel possessed Fort Garry his hand demanded the downing of the Company flag, because company control was defunct. And they had hoisted a fleur de lis and shamrock flag, the shamrock insisted upon by O'Donoghue—of their own invention—the Metis flag, which was not the flag used in French Canada. This Metis flag now waved over the mass meeting.

The Metis now vociferously protested the raising of the Company flag to replace the flag of the settlement. Smith did not protest the matter. All men present carried arms of some sort as tools of their daily employment, and few of them would take Smith's dictation—not until they knew more of just what he was about.

Smith prefaced his presentation of documents with an address neighborly in its friendliness, recalling to all his personal family affiliations with a great many of those present, in near or remote degree. He denied scornfully any association with McDougall. He spoke ingratiatingly and the effect was reinforced by his famous habitual gesture of a sort of waterless ablution of his hands making him seem a mild man.

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IN the intense cold the mass of people stood patiently, intent and concentrated upon the reading of Smith's numerous and impressive documents. There were not only his letters of commission from MacDonald but also official letters and documents of several cabinet ministers, and an address from the Governor General of Canada speaking in the name of the Queen to advise her people to be of good behaviour and to take only the proper measures for redress of grievances.

Riel after an examination of the bona fides of each document (in secret trepidation, as he had not

seen them before and did not know what might explode upon them) made careful precise translations to the satisfaction of the most expert bi-linguals in the audience. In the slow solemn presentation of this mass of high flown rhetorical compositions the people felt no urge to immediate self expression—even when the more alert spotted the discrepancy between what Smith had said his authority was and what Macdonald said it was. At the end of the day this business was still unfinished and the meeting had to continue into a second day.

Public opinion began to crystallize in the informal discussions of neighborly groups through the evening. The fact that Smith had misrepresented his limited powers of negotiation was the keynote. He had gained great ascendancy over many persons, themselves influential, by his assertion that he had full power to make agreement. He lost it when the documents revealed the gross exaggeration. It was a community where people lived without fortification of legal forms and finesse of detail and to the judgment of these Smith's good faith was now open.

Next morning, Riel sensed in the atmosphere of the opening session that he had gained ground. Smith came to the same conclusion a little more slowly. At conclusion of the formal readings and translations, Riel suddenly proposed that they refer all documents to a convention of persons to be elected by the people on the basis of 20 English and 20 French speaking. As the Metis were much more numerous the fairness of this captured public enthusiasm and the shivering audience assented and adjourned. It was not what Smith expected or wanted but he discovered his lack of influence to prevent it. He did not accept the decision for an election until some time later when Riel took advantage of a dramatic situation to enforce his will upon Smith.

As the second meeting was about

to adjourn, someone in the crowd asked that the Canadian prisoners seized from Schultz' house be released. Riel believed they would promptly make trouble as they had not been amenable even to the discipline of their own leader, Dennis; and Smith seemed of the same opinion—they had been bitter opponents of the Company for a long time. They were not released at that time.

Riel concluded proceedings with a happy, boyish speech: "I came here with fear. We (meaning English and French) were not enemies yet but we came near being so. As soon as we understood one another, we joined in demanding what our English fellow subjects, in common with us, believe to be our rights. I am not afraid to say 'our rights' for we will have our rights. We claim no half rights, mind you, but all the rights we are entitled to. These rights will be set forth by representatives and, what is more, we shall get them."

THE show of unity with which French and English alike set to work to elect delegates to the Convention of Forty was heartening. The great mass meeting on the open prairie had stimulated a sense of community and Riel's suggestion of equal numerical representation of the two factions was popular. The English natives sent in several men who later held important offices in the governments of both Manitoba and Canada. The Metis voters rid Riel of those followers whose defections had caused him anxiety and embarrassment.

He saw in the Convention an opportunity to use it to create a new more permanent Provisional Government to replace the previous Metis organization with one which would include the English-speaking and also to use it to formulate clearly an expression of what the settlement wanted of Canada if it were to be incorporated with the Canadian federation.

When the Convention assembled

he displayed consummate tact in nominating for the chairmanship Judge Black, a former opponent and a Company official, and throughout pursued a pattern of compromise calculated to impress the English-speaking delegates.

Smith sat with the Convention as the only person on the spot with any authority from Macdonald to negotiate. And over the 17 days of the sessions Riel pursued a lively and relentless debate with him as to just what were the limits of his authority. Just what these were never became clear, because in the course of the sessions Smith received a letter from Prime Minister Macdonald which in effect withdrew from him all powers of negotiation and imposed upon him the instruction that he inform the settlement that it was the firm decision of the government to adhere to its plan that the government of the Northwest was to be composed of Lieutenant Governor and assistant administrators all appointed by Ottawa. Not only was representative government not contemplated at that time, but there was to be no promise of any such government in future. Smith's own interests precluded his revealing this letter. He played his cards close to his chest and bluffed.

Smith insisted at the outset that Riel's Bill of Rights be discarded—the Bill of Rights first accepted by the Metis National Committee and later confusedly ratified by the Joint Convention. Riel readily agreed and accepted the chairmanship of a committee of equal numbers of French and English delegates to replace the old Bill of Rights with another which would be in effect a proposed constitution for a new legislative entity in the Dominion of Canada, differing in condition, circumstances and interests from any other province yet admitted.

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THE report of this committee was debated by the Convention for 15 days, with Riel showing his Eng-

lish colleagues a willingness to compromise and patiently canvass all varieties of alternatives, which surprised them. The basic dispute was about status—whether the territory should be established as a province with full provincial autonomous powers, or as a territory with limited powers.

Provincial status would give the local government control of land and other natural resources, and Company officials among the English delegates followed Smith's lead in opposing this because the more numerous Metis element would probably interfere with the grants of land to the Company arranged for in the agreement of sale between the Company and Canada.

Within this matter of status were innumerable items of detail such as use of both languages in courts and education provision for educational institutions, freedom of religion, federal grants to be asked for—in fact the whole gamut of constitutional problems. The prolonged debates gave each faction an opportunity to understand the other much better and decreased their suspicions of each other's motives. In the end a Bill of Rights was hammered out without much acrimony and with general satisfaction with the result. It was carried by an almost unanimous vote, certain English delegates abstaining because they doubted whether they had power to support without consulting their electors. They did not know the futility of their efforts but they had come to know and understand each other much better.

At the end, Smith presented what looked like a useful suggestion—that the Convention nominate a delegation to present their idea to Ottawa. "On behalf of the Canadian government I promise you that the delegation will be hospitably received," he said.

This suggestion which looked so logical in Red River and which put Smith's personal promise behind his promise on behalf of Canada as to a "hospitable reception," and

which was promptly accepted by the Convention of Forty, was to lead to near tragedy for the delegation subsequently chosen.

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RIEL seized the matter of abstention from the vote by some delegates, to present the idea that the Convention of Forty proceed to create a Provisional Government of duly elected representatives of both factions, to function until acceptable terms had been reached with Canada. He pointed out that Company government was moribund and Company authority abrogated, and without something created by the people themselves the settlement would be in a state of anarchy.

Smith opposed this vigorously, not because he was particularly interested in restoring Company authority but because he wanted to rid the scene of Riel who, he perceived, would be indispensable to such an organization, and who also would be powerless without it. Company men among the delegates, who were not in Smith's full confidence, followed Smith's lead but put more emphasis upon the expediency of retaining what was familiar. They could come to no clear conclusion.

Suddenly late in the evening one delegate made the muddled suggestion that they consult Governor McTavish and ask that he delegate

his authority to the Provisional Government—which would knit up everything and make for formal regularity (quite overlooking the priority of Smith in the Company hierarchy). With a speed which gave neither Riel nor Smith time to criticize, the Convention there and then despatched two French and two English as a committee to approach McTavish and they rushed off to his house, late at night as it was.

"I am a dying man and I will delegate my authority to no one," McTavish said from his sick bed.

Then rousing himself he addressed them impulsively: "Go and form your government. For God's sake go and form a government and restore peace and order."

That finished the debate in the Convention which at the outset had been deadlocked. The Convention immediately ratified a Provisional Government by voting Riel into its Presidency unanimously. With this authority Riel could proceed to arrange the holding of elections in which French and English speaking people would co-operate to produce such a government.

Smith had a new problem.

The Metis held a rousing celebration which they embellished with fireworks which had been imported by Dr. Schultz to celebrate the triumphant entry of McDougall.

Chapter Nine

The First Bloodshed

LOUIS, a stranger to his people after ten years' absence, had returned to his mother's farm in 1858. Now, after a period of less than five months' activity—from the survey incident in October, 1869 to the Convention of Forty in February, 1870—he found himself the accepted leader of Red River people of both factions and prospective leader of a union Provincial Government, for elections to which arrangements were under way.

Events had proceeded through the incidents of Métis National Committee, prevention of the Dennis survey, resistance to the entrance of McDougall, joint convention of National Committee and English-speaking representatives, seizure of Schultz and his followers without a battle, mass meeting on the open prairie in mid-January to hear Donald A. Smith, Convention of Forty, in late January and early February which had just closed. An attempt at armed force made by Colonel Dennis on McDougall's authority had failed because of the refusal of the native people of the settlement to have anything to do with it.

At the mass meeting, Donald A. Smith had agreed with Riel that the forty-five prisoners taken from Dr. Schultz' barricaded house, and including Dr. Schultz and Thomas Scott, should not be liberated from the Fort Garry prison. Dr. Schultz had been a leading figure of Winnipeg for more than ten years, but Thomas Scott was an almost unknown figure, certainly less known to the community than most of the other 45 prisoners.

While the Convention of Forty was assembling, several of those prisoners escaped custody, among them Schultz and Scott. Scott proceeded to a distant settlement, Portage la Prairie, mainly Protestant in its settlers, and spread reports there such that he induced something more than a hundred

men armed with whatever they had—some had only clubs—to return with him to Fort Garry to liberate the remainder of the prisoners. He told the Portage people that Métis were cowards and would not fight and that releasing the prisoners would be an easy task. They set out from Portage February 12, two days after the Convention of Forty had closed its sessions, and arrived at Fort Garry February 16, where they came under the command of Major Boulton, who had been Dennis' military leader in the McDougall affair.

Major Boulton and a detachment which included Scott went in a little ahead of the main body on a private mission—they made a dash upon the house of one Coutu where Riel usually lodged, surrounded it, and made a careful search hoping to find Riel. But Riel was not there.

R IEL had been kept informed of every move from the moment of the escape of the prisoners by his scattered scouts, had surmised that the purpose of the leaders was more than the release of the prisoners, and had made plans such that if violent trouble came his Métis should not have to take the blame. Upon Métis troops in Fort Garry he imposed strictest restraint and chose trustworthy commanders of known ability to impose good discipline.

The Métis sentries at the Fort fired signal shots as the Boulton men approached, but remained quiet as they passed and went on to their rendezvous at Kildonan Presbyterian church in the village of Winnipeg. There Boulton's men were joined by Schultz with a band of greater numbers and a supply of small arms and one cannon. The total force amounted to about 400 men.

On their way from Fort Garry to Kildonan church, Boulton's men encountered a "half-wit" boy named Parisien, who was excited and

curious, and whom they mistook for a Metis spy. They arrested him and put him for the night in a cell rigged up under the church pulpit. Next morning in the early confusion, Parisien freed himself, seized a gun and escaped. Firing wildly in his dash, his shot killed a young man named Sutherland, a passer-by engaged with neither side. This was the first bloodshed. The Boulton men recaptured Parisien and Scott beat him so severely that he died in a day or two. This was the second bloodshed.

These unfortunate fatalities alarmed the English-speaking people, who had already made many sacrifices and endured much to prevent violence, and the community foregathered worriedly in little knots to discuss what steps to take.

Miss Victoria McVicar, a young woman of charm, courage and kindness, who was a visitor from Fort William, made a private decision and entirely on her own responsibility went to the Fort and appealed to Riel to release the prisoners and spare more trouble and accidents.

Riel received her courteously and explained that the prisoners had had it in their own power to be free at any time that they would sign a pledge not to use force against the Provisional Government; unfortunately up to that time the 24 men still in detention had refused to do so.

Miss McVicar hurried back to her relatives and neighbors with this news and with the vigorous suggestion that somebody do something about it when it was as simple as that. The community was already embarked on elections to a unified Provisional Government in which both sides were participating; it looked simple to her for the leading men of the community to demand to see the prisoners, explain to them and advise them to take that sensible pledge.

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A NUMBER of men promptly went off to Fort Garry, demanded of Riel access to the prisoners, which he granted, and presently confronted

Riel with 24 prisoners with a sudden change of heart.

Riel released them—to the dismay and chagrin of his colleagues on the Executive Council and his followers, who had not the political sagacity to estimate the significance that the ring-leaders had been free for some time and that Boulton had keyed his propaganda on freeing just those prisoners. They were in a humor to jape their leader about his misplaced chivalry and his sudden astonishing weakness for female charm to which he was not usually susceptible. Riel declined to explain all his reasons just then and bore with them with great reserve.

The ostensible purpose of the Portage expedition now having been achieved, many of them now insisted on breaking up and going home.

But young Thomas Scott would have none of this. He insisted that the Fort be attacked anyhow, boastfully arguing that Metis were all cowards and arguing that the Portage men would show themselves cowards if they did not take this advantage.

Donald A. Smith had kept closely in touch with these visitors and he now vigorously opposed any such rash move. Largely because of his insistence, the plan was abandoned. Schultz withdrew his men and Major Boulton prepared for the Portage men to return home.

But Scott and his personal faction of more turbulent men, although ostensibly submitting to the commands of Major Boulton and Smith, found a way to express resentment. They sent Riel a statement signed by the released prisoners that they had no intention of carrying out the pledge which they had given in exchange for their liberty. When this failed to incite the Metis, they staged a derisive demonstration before the Fort.

Riel's men were enraged to the point of charging Riel with incomprehensible weakness, but Riel insisted they endure. Presently the cat calls and insults of the demonstrators became too much for them to endure and they swarmed out, seized Scott and his men without

much difficulty in a fisticuff and gunbutt melee, and clapped them into prison, gathering up Boulton also in the melee.

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RIEL'S behaviour following the capture of Major Boulton and Scott and his turbulent insurgents, was mysterious to most observers and even to his own colleagues and followers.

While Major Boulton was familiarizing himself with his prison quarters, Riel appeared suddenly in his cell and said to him calmly, "You are to die at noon tomorrow," and left abruptly.

This singular, sudden, informal sentence without consent of his colleagues, and the manner of its delivery startled everybody, including Boulton, and the news spread almost instantly from the Fort to the settlements where it renewed the turmoil of excitement just when it was abating.

Donald A. Smith, the Anglican clergy and Roman Catholic priests and sundry prominent English-speaking residents including the mother of the dead Sutherland boy hurried to the Fort to implore Riel to moderate his harsh decision. They were surprised to find him calm, courteous, but quite obdurate. The one compromise he would offer was to exchange Boulton for Dr. Schultz. But no one could find Schultz. They scoured the community, but Schultz had vanished—it came out later that he had hastily left the country for Ontario. Beyond this Riel would not budge.

His arguments were sharp and clear-cut. To Smith, to James Ross, the Chief Justice under the reconstructed Provisional Government, to Bannantyne the postmaster and friend of the Metis, and others as they came, he defended his decision vigorously, arguing that the settlement now had a government publicly accepted by all elements and that Major Boulton had revolted against it, had raised up and led an armed force of invaders and that blood had been shed. If he failed to take firm action no person would or could respect that government; he

failed to understand, he said, how even some of his own sympathizers did not appreciate Major Boulton's offence. He was, he said, firmly resolved that Boulton's execution must be carried out "bitterly as I deplore the necessity for it." "Some of these English settlers, and more particularly the Canadians, believe that we would not dare take the life of anyone," he told Ross and Bannantyne, "and under these circumstances it will be impossible to have peace and order. An example must be made."

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LATE in the afternoon, Riel again visited Boulton in his cell and talked with him, telling him he knew the real purpose of the Portage affair had not been merely to release the prisoners but to seize himself, destroy the Provisional Government and prevent the elections; their attempt to kidnap him at the house of Coutu was clear proof of this intention.

But next morning, shortly before the hour appointed for execution, Riel withdrew the order as abruptly as he had imposed it.

A stream of persons had appealed to him, and as many different explanations were offered, Mrs. Sutherland, mother of the dead Sutherland boy, who had known him in boyhood, pleaded that one life having been lost he spare another. To her Riel said that he would give her her request.

Pere Lestance, the priest who had been Riel's tutor, said in Calgary many years later that the change of heart was a divine response to his own incessant supplications of prayer—he had prayed constantly until the very stroke of the hour of execution.

Major Boulton, in later writing of the event, attributed it to his own personal influence with his Metis guards, who were not inclined to such extreme measures in his case and proved open to his persuasions of them to intercede with Riel's colleagues.

But Donald A. Smith, in his report to the Canadian Government, wrote that he saved the life of Boulton by

coming to agreement with Riel; he characterized Riel's behavior as diplomatic and took full credit to himself for a timely change of attitude which compromised the difficulty and "placated" the leader.

In retrospect, the manner of informal arbitrary personal imposition of the sentence in the first place was oddly and sharply at variance with Riel's habits and theories of democratic responsible government. He was a stickler for formality and a rigid disciplinarian, fond of due ceremony, never inclined and seldom driven to arbitrary action and, most particularly, avoided by every possible means the appearance of it. Normally Boulton would have had a court martial.

Much later, it appeared that Riel had imposed the bargain upon Smith, rather than, as Smith suggested, that Smith won a victory.

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A CLOSE examination of all documentary and verbal evidence preserved from the time has suggested that Riel was indeed "diplomatic"—in that he never seriously intended the sentence to be carried out; that he staged it in the first place for the express purpose of withdrawing it when he had won the "placation" from Smith. The incident, by the calendar, sat squarely between two very different attitudes taken publicly by Smith in respect to nominations for the forthcoming elections to the Provisional Government. Up to that time Smith himself had not accepted the Provisional Government, although it had been established by the Convention of Forty; he had been active before that moment in persuading English-speaking voters to boycott nominations and elections; after this incident he reversed himself and went publicly among the people to urge their co-operation.

Riel's main purpose was most probably this coercion of Smith. He had the other objectives of impress-

ing the settlement with a sense of the righteous authority of the government even to the point of death, and incidentally he seized the opportunity to display himself to such as Mrs. Sutherland as a man of sentiment and compassion.

Major Boulton later wrote an account of these events with a report of an extraordinary interview: "As soon as Archbishop Maclean had left" (after informing Boulton that his life had been spared), "I lay down and went to sleep. I could not have been long asleep when I was suddenly awakened by someone shaking me. I looked up and saw Riel with a lantern. He said, 'Major Boulton I have come to see you. I have come to shake you by the hand and to make a proposition to you. I perceive that you are a man of ability, and that you are a leader. The English-speaking people have no leader. Will you join my government and be their leader?'"

Boulton replied that he would consider the proposal if Riel would release the other prisoners. He heard nothing more about it. He would not have declined the offer, he has said, if Riel had complied with that request.

But it is evident that the release of the prisoners at that time, even with Boulton's sincerest co-operation, would have been inopportune and might have led to further trouble, and would not have been endured by Riel's following—all of which was open to Riel's perception. It had been demonstrated that Boulton could not control Thomas Scott and Scott's faction from Portage.

Major Boulton's own explanation of his taking command of Scott's Portage recruits when they neared Fort Garry was that he did it to save the misinformed Portage men from more serious trouble and with the hope of directing matters so as to save as much as he could for peace.

Chapter Ten

Death Penalty

THOMAS Scott was now Riel's prisoner for the second time. On the first occasion he had been a little known person among the belligerent followers of Dr. Schultz, who, insubordinate to Colonel Dennis, had barricaded themselves in Schultz' house and defied the Metis to come and get them, and then had surrendered to the Metis when they came.

On this second occasion, he had been seized after himself personally shedding the first blood in the whole trouble, after he had, on his own responsibility, raised an insurrectionary force of over a hundred men with arms in a distant settlement and marched it to Fort Garry, and after he had shown insubordination to his own superior in command, Major Boulton, by inciting the released prisoners to sign a statement repudiating the pledge which they had given in exchange for their freedom, and to send it to Riel (president of the government recently confirmed in authority by both English and French speaking factions of the native population), and by further inciting them to beligerence before the Fort.

In prison he continued his violence, demonstrating his incorrigibility. He was the one man left in the whole settlement who was determined upon armed violence, and a demonstrably dangerous man who would perpetrate violence if he could gather no more than twenty or thirty ignorant truculent associates, and of staging this violence, as he had already done with two deaths resulting—one by his own hand—in ways likely to result in the bloodshed of innocent, uninvolved, utterly pacific parts of the population accidentally happening to be in his vicinity.

Scott was incapable of understanding the current political situation or of conceiving a political end for which to fight, or of formulating

an intelligent issue in opposition to Riel. He had been born and reared in a place where the sentiment was pervasive and taken for granted that half-breeds of whatever origin, Roman Catholics, and the French language were contemptible.

He adhered thoughtlessly to these sentiments with the force and violence of a truculent, turbulent nature. What to the more intelligent of his associates was a rational political issue capable of being compromised or modified was to him merely a blind sentiment which he felt free in this foreign frontier place—as he would not have felt free in his birthplace—to express with a gun.

His record, from his entry into the country as one of Snow's road-gangs, had been one of continuous turbulence and innumerable minor disorders culminating in his assault upon and attempted drowning of Contractor Snow, his employer, in a brawl over wages, for which he had been heavily fined in a Hudson's Bay Company court.

He had derided both the sentence and the Hudson's Bay Company court which imposed it, as he incessantly derided all local forms of authority.

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A PART from the imprisonment in civil court by the Company authorities, he was now for the second time in prison as prisoner of war, taken in his own armed violence. The only safe, common-sense course to preserve the peace of a pacified community engaged in orderly electoral processes, was to detain him there until those elections should ensue in the more permanent government, seated in authority and able to administer and negotiate.

Riel was not only the President of the first Provisional Government still in temporary authority, but had already been confirmed by the almost unanimous vote of the Con-

vention of Forty as the President of the government about to be elected—a situation which Riel himself recognized as tentative, and the implementation of which he asserted he would not press, should the succeeding government decide against it, but a situation not felt tentative by the community.

Literally no one was soliciting the freedom of Scott. Every responsible person in the community, including Donald A. Smith, who had bargained with Riel for and obtained the freedom of Major Boulton, felt it inadvisable to release him.

But keeping Scott in jail was a problem.

From the outset, he was violently insubordinate and disorderly, constantly insulting his guards, challenging them and taunting them with cowardice when they kept their tempers. On March 1, he tried to effect the escape of the entire party by forcing the doors and rushing the guards; that he did not succeed was due to the reluctance of his fellow prisoners to participate in such reckless tactics. The guards, exasperated beyond the limits of their endurance, dragged him out of the building and were punishing him savagely when one of the members of the Council observed the uproar, intervened and restored order, and reported the matter to Riel. It was the first serious breach in Riel's severe discipline.

The situation from Riel's point of view was a critical one, in which preservation of public calm was important to the general public safety and in which he could not afford to lose disciplinary power over the Metis. In four months of courageous activity he had created a framework of democratic government and brought the two factions—English and French-speaking natives—into unified acceptance of it.

Following his successful resistance to McDougall's entry, at which time Dennis had departed, he had brought Donald A. Smith, his most powerful opponent, into support of the election proceedings; Dr. Schultz his only belligerent, implacable foe of any stature, had left the country

together with other leading Canadians of Winnipeg village; Major Boulton who had been Dennis' military chief of staff, was, by his own later written evidence, ready to consider joining as co-leader on behalf of the English speaking natives—on Riel's invitation.

The prisoners were the only remaining dissidents desirous of making trouble and without Scott to give them ignorant leadership for ignorant, senseless violence, they might safely have been released. The only threat to orderly progress was this new problem of maintaining discipline of his own personal Metis following who were enraged by Scott into their first breach of Riel's strict and rigidly maintained discipline which they had hitherto accepted without much complaint in spite of its taxing strains upon them.

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THE Metis now appeared before Riel with a demand that Scott be brought before a Council of War—a court martial. Riel refused, partly wishing to avoid such public attention to the matter and partly determining to prevent insubordination. But the Metis were obdurate and out of hand.

Riel had to do something to placate them. But he proceeded with caution through several stages of proceedings which were understood in Red River but which were never to be realized elsewhere for half a century.

In his capacity of President of the Provisional Government, he summoned Scott and invited him to give a coherent account of his position, to be orderly and keep himself quiet, "so that I may have the excuse for preventing you from being brought before the Council of the Attorney General."

Scott answered roughly and disdainfully, mistaking clemency for cowardice; and it came to nothing.

Returned to his cell, unpunished, increasingly arrogant, taunting and challenging, Scott further enraged the Metis, who turned upon Riel with the threat that, if Scott were not shot, they themselves would

shoot Riel. He saw that their excitement had now become irrational. He tried visiting Scott in his cell with another warning that he had the power and authority to have him shot; but Scott sneered that the Metis were a pack of cowards who would not dare shoot him.

The Council now took the initiative and insisted upon a court of seven members specifically to try Scott, but gave to Riel the right to name them himself.

The tribunal attempted to sit with formality, but when Scott was brought before them he immediately overset a table in an attempt to assault Riel and continued obstreperous. He was charged with breaking his oath not to take up arms against the Provisional Government, with assaulting a guard, and assaulting the President of the Provisional Government.

Riel translated the words of the tribunal when Scott did not understand, announced the finding, and delivered sentence. Sworn testimony was taken.

To one judge, who favored exile and suggested a safe escort to the border, Scott retorted that he would be back at Fort Garry before his guards had returned.

Five of the seven judges favored the death sentence; one a sentence of exile, and the seventh, Ambrose Lepine, personally opposed the death sentence but when it became the finding of the majority brought himself to agreement with them.

Riel listened to appeals for clemency by Pere Lestance, Rev. Mr. Young, Donald A. Smith and some others. To Pere Lestance he replied, "I have spared two lives because of your pleadings, and if I spare this man they will think I am fooling. I must make an example for the sake of peace and order." To Young he was more reserved, but, to Smith he added to the explanation already given to the others that Scott was incorrigible, unable to appreciate clemency, and an insoluble problem in the matter of maintaining discipline among the Metis.

In a letter to Lieutenant-Governor Morris of Manitoba some years later, Riel said that another reason had been to speed the sending of the three delegates to Ottawa from a peaceful community.

Scott's trial was conducted March 3. His execution took place March 4 by a firing squad captained by Andre Nault.

Except for the cautions of the few leading citizens referred to above, who suggested but did not press for clemency, Scott's execution attracted little attention in Red River and was forgotten after a few days. When the new Provisional Government for which elections had been proceeding assembled and went into session two weeks later no mention whatever of Scott was made in the debates.

THE newly elected members of the union Provisional Government, which called itself the Legislature of Assinaboia, assembled in session about two weeks after the execution of Scott. Internally, the Red River settlement was now tranquil; any source of further trouble lay far away in Canada. There had been no collusion whatever between the Metis and Quebec, and Quebec leaders in the Canadian government had been party to Macdonald's effort to impose a despotic form of government upon the new territory. Louis had retained no contacts with anyone he had met in Montreal in his college days. The Metis felt no kinship with French-Canadians but had developed a sense of themselves as a new entity, their rights in their own country deriving from their own nativity and from their descent from the Indians, the "natural" owners of the plains.

The main business of the new Legislature was to appoint and prepare delegates to go to Ottawa with a revised Bill of Rights as the basis for their negotiations with the Macdonald government.

One of their early measures was the passing of a resolution of loyalty to Great Britain and the British sovereign—a loyalty which they felt and which Louis had emphatically

cultivated. They also sent to the British government a resolution deprecating that it had omitted to give any attention to the rights and sentiments of the inhabitants of the territory in the proceedings of transfer of governmental authority.

As the Bill of Rights was, in effect, an outline of the constitutional forms they desired for future government, Riel insisted upon detailed debates of the minutest details, using these to tutor the people in the philosophic basis of democratic responsible government along the lines of British traditions, of which he had a lucid grasp, and which he communicated with clarity.

The prospects were bright for a satisfactory negotiation as the Canadian government, considerably chastened by its failures in the McDougall matters, and later reassured by the reports of Thibault, de Saleberry, and Dr. Tuppér, had already brought itself to accept Smith's suggestion that it receive and negotiate with three official delegates from the Legislature of Assinaboia.

Macdonald had not only retreated from his rigid determination not to recognize Red River people but with better information had so far altered his imaginary conception of Louis Riel that on February 23 he had written to a friend, "Everything looks well for a delegation coming to Ottawa, including the redoubtable Riel. If we once get him here he is a gone coon. There is no place in the ministry for him to set next to Howe but perhaps we can make a senator of him for the territory." Unfortunately Louis never knew about this.

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IN the first stages of his formulation of demands Riel had devoted his main attention to safeguarding the rights and customs of the Metis, their language, religion, land titles etc.; but his success in gaining the adherence of the English-speaking natives led him to enlarge his vision to the seeking of greater powers of direct representational government with equal opportunities for all, trusting to the people themselves to

work out their own salvation, — like his father he felt that if the Metis were permitted one generation of peaceful schooling they would be abreast of all the rest of the country, and self-adapted to the new order.

The Hudson's Bay Company he insisted should be on the same footing as other merchants and should not have special privileges and resources. This contention made an immediate problem for Donald A. Smith who was still in Red River. Smith decided not to debate the matter with the legislators and immediately transferred his base of operations to Ottawa, where he went into artful activity to prevent the new province — if it were to be a province — from having authority over land and natural resources.

McDougall and his associates had sedulously spread the report that Riel was merely a witless tool of the priests, and that the disaffection of the Metis was a cultivation of the Catholic Jesuits in an attempt to build up their power beyond Quebec. That Riel was in close collusion with the priests was merely believed and became an enduring legend, just as was another one — that he hated the British and rebelled against British rule. Red River was still many days distant from the nearest telegraph or railway, and mail communication was slow and uncertain. No news of actual happenings about such matters penetrated the east.

Just at this time Louis took a course of action, such that his attitudes can not be open to debate.

Bishop Tache arrived in Red River with a commission from the Macdonald government, and a verbal report of a verbal promise by Macdonald that an amnesty would be granted to all involved in the McDougall affair and later political matters.

Bishop Tache had arranged Louis' college education and secured him his Montreal patrons. He was and had been for a long time the most prominent personage in Red River. He had left for Rome in the previous July to attend important church

councils there. MacDonald had sent to Rome for him in December after the McDougall fiasco, and he had come promptly to Ottawa. Now, in March, four days after the execution of Scott, he arrived in Red River. Had he come in his clerical capacity it would have been felt routine. But he came as the authorized representative of the Canadian government — and Louis was instantly suspicious. The legislature of Assinabola was to assemble in just a few days and many of the newly-elected members were in personal awe of church high dignitaries.

Riel refrained from giving the Bishop an official or personal greeting, and he refused him communication with the people until Tache would consent to recognize the new government formally. To make sure of this last matter, Riel put a military guard around the Bishop's palace and, while permitting the guard to go in for a blessing, informed them emphatically that they should receive it from Tache as their Bishop and not as a Canadian commissioner, making the distinction emphatically plain.

"It is not the Bishop of St. Boniface, but Canada, that passes," he put it tersely.

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THE Bishop fumed and fussed; but the guard remained. The Bishop presently notified that he would give the required formal recognition of the Legislature and of Riel as its president. But the church almost immediately withdrew the chaplain who had pre-

viously performed church rites at Fort Garry, and did not replace him.

Riel remained suspicious because in the matter of the amnesty Tache brought no documents or letters—only quotations of verbal promises given by members of the Macdonald government. Any warmth of regard that had ever existed between them froze with that incident. Subsequent developments in the matter of the amnesty were such that Riel lost every confidence in Tache.

Louis had returned to Red River after ten years' absence only a little before Tache's departure for Rome, and it is probable that this was the Bishop's first meeting with Louis since his boyhood.

The military authority of the Canadian government could be exercised no matter what status the new entity ensued from the negotiations, and this matter of an amnesty was important. On through the next four months the Bishop was to reiterate many times the verbal promise of amnesty, with every appearance of his own sincere confidence in the good faith of the Canadian government. But Riel remained suspicious and, as it turned out, the promise was not kept.

Riel, to make as sure as possible, insisted that the Bill of Rights contain a special clause covering it, about which the delegates, although they were given discretion in many other matters, had no discretion whatever.

The matter of the amnesty led to Riel's temporary exile with his life in jeopardy within four months.

Chapter Eleven

Betrayal and Flight

RIEL declined to be one of the delegation of three from the new Legislature of Assiniboia, to go to Ottawa to negotiate the terms upon which Red River would agree to become part of Canada. He had received apparently reliable information that the Canadian government was now ready to negotiate upon the basis of his revised Bill of Rights and that the cabinet had such ascendancy over Parliament that what it agreed to would be passed by Parliament with little alteration.

He supposed therefore that the most danger lay in any misadventure in Red River—some unforeseeable breach of the peace which might give Macdonald an excuse for retrogression and he proposed to stay in Red River and keep everything straight and ship-shape.

What he did not know was that all varieties of foes had already foregathered in Ontario and were lying there with well laid plans to explode the favorable situation and that while his cause would be won, the winners were to be faced with a hostility which would jeopardize their very lives back in Red River.

It has been a fascinating speculation of research historians studying the great masses of documentary archives never opened until about twenty years ago, how much influence Riel himself might have exerted and how the sudden exhibition of the man himself for what he was and what commanding presence he had might have influenced the feelings and opinions of a mass electorate to whom he was grossly and foully misrepresented so that to this day he is a legendary ogre in large sections of popular opinion—"the savage French half-breed," "half-breed rebel," "half-breed traitor," "lunatic half-breed who misled the poor Metis," etc.

The delegation was poorly selected. It was composed of Judge Black,

a Company official, who was retiring and returning to Scotland (and so could stop in Ottawa on the way, at least expense to the local treasury); A. H. Scott, a United States citizen resident in Winnipeg village, a most unsuitable personality (who however was inactive and so did little damage); and Rev. Pere Richot a beloved Roman Catholic priest, keenly interested in his people, shrewd, courageous and efficient, but somewhat deficient in the use of the English language. The mere fact of the latter's being a priest was to put him in the character of "red flag to a bull" in Ontario, torn for many years by French-Roman Catholic English-Protestant-Orange feuds. At moments Pere Richot's very life was to be in danger.

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IT was assumed in Red River that their delegation would be "cordially received" as Donald A. Smith "speaking on behalf of the government of Canada" had "assured" them, and that Smith himself would be supplementing his guarantee with unofficial hospitality.

But Donald A. Smith had already for several weeks been in Ottawa engaged in an astute campaign to insure the safety of his stakes of land, minerals, and tax exemptions arranged to be retained as the private property of the company by the agreement of sale.

Schultz and his colleagues, who had left Red River before the execution of Scott, had arrived in Ontario along with the news of it, and discovered in the death of Scott exactly the incident they needed to set Ontario aflame.

They rallied to their scheme every agency in Ontario with a present or prospective interest in destroying or forcing out of Red River "that half-breed scum," "those dangerous Roman Catholic Frenchies," detri-

mental to progress, real estate speculation and homesteading by eastern immigrants; all the advocates of despotism for a new Crown Colony of old Canada; every rabid Protestant, every Orangeman, every timid soul who had nightmares about "rule by Quebec"; in short every citizen who was in the grip of a fixed prejudice.

One way or another, the mass public opinion of Ontario was swept into a blaze like a forest fire against the native population of Red River, and against "Lewis Reel," their ogre leader, "the horns on the Catholic devil," the "cloven hoof of Quebec." They demanded of Macdonald that the government not confer with any such delegation. It was popularly believed that Riel had conquered Red River by mob force, that he was almost a savage, and that Red River had been subdued by tomahawks.

With infinite devices they built a legend of Thomas Scott as "the fine young man from Ontario," "the son of one of Ontario's finest Protestant families, foully murdered by French Catholic half-breeds," "savages," "living like Indians," "Orange hero cruelly murdered, buried alive, by savage half-breeds out there on those wild prairies." Associates of Dr. Schultz drew Scott's embarrassed family into the limelight and induced a brother to swear information on which a charge of murder of Scott was laid against the members of the delegation.

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ONTARIO politicians rushed into the fray, drew the affair into provincial politics, and members of the legislature addressed the Ontario assembly with references to the approaching delegation as "men red with the blood of murdered Scott." A mass meeting was whipped up in a Toronto railway depot, which frenziedly passed a resolution that no minion of the murderer Riel, no representative of a conspiracy, in itself everything that Britain detests, should be allowed to pass this platform—if he gets this far."

Public meetings all over the province passed seething resolutions that Riel be hanged. One Toronto newspaper told a sensationally embellished story of Scott's "murder without trial" in turned rules of deep black mourning reserved for the deaths of kings and queens.

Schultz, Mair, and Lynch (Lynch had been imprisoned with the Schultz house barricaders) were the official guests of the city of Toronto, where no hall was large enough to hold the crowd that wanted to cheer and hear them. The chairman compared them to the heroes of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. The Toronto Globe was horrified that Scott's firing squad had knelt in prayer—"blasphemy unparalleled in the history of the world" was the Globe's opinion. (The Globe had published the early Red River letters of Charles Mair).

No public man and no newspaper told the public that the government of Canada as yet had no more rights in Red River than it had in the state of New York; no whisper of McDougall's forgery of the name of the Queen to a bogus proclamation reached Ontario ears, then or later.

So violent was feeling, particularly in Toronto, that the delegates on advice, changed their route and entered Canada by way of Ogdensburg, to avoid the Toronto mobs. On their safe arrival at Ottawa they were instantly arrested, on the charge already arranged, the murder of Scott. The Macdonald government retained a lawyer for them, and as there was no evidence against them, they had to be discharged. A member of parliament complained to Parliament that the delegates were threatened with lynching at the court house door by a mob led by a government official.

The delegation was unnerved for its business. But Pere Richot put his heart and intelligence into the negotiations, and Macdonald, an "old hand" assessed the uproar shrewdly and made the bargain he already had in mind.

His bargain was a shrewd placation of all factions: Donald A.

Smith got withholding of land control; ownership of lands and resources was vested in the Canadian federal authority. The new province received a subsidy in lieu of control of lands; and for the Metis, 400,000 acres of land was granted, which they had not asked for, to be divided among the children of half-breeds residing in the province at the time.

Such interests as the Schultz associates stood to profit by federal control of land and resources for many years—it permitted them to arrange their land titles with Ottawa. The Hudson's Bay Company received cash payment of 300,000 pounds immediately.

Red River got the Manitoba Act of 1870—a comparison of it with the Act of 1869 demonstrates what Riel's agitation of six months won not only for Manitoba but for later provinces established on the precedent of Manitoba.

But the Metis land grant was deferred and poorly administered, and the deprivation of Riel's leadership in what immediately followed caused them to lose much of the benefit and lead to their squandering of the benefits in ignorance of their rights and how to make use of them.

There were two causes for alarm: the Macdonald government declined to ratify formally the promises made by its commissioner, Bishop Tache, for amnesty for Riel and the Metis involved with the National Committee; and the government announced, in co-operation with the British government, the sending of an army to Red River—a "quiet police expedition."

Within three months the frenzied emotions of Ontario were to destroy Riel's freedom and jeopardize his life.

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THE first news that provincial status had been won so gratified Red River, that the Metis men immediately left for the spring buffalo hunt far away, the farmers took up their tillage, and general satisfaction reigned.

Then news trickled through of the indignities to their delegation in Ontario. This puzzled Red River. Rumors of the tumults and uproars in Ontario must be exaggerated or perhaps simply untrue, they felt.

Further rumors of delay in amnesty and of the sending by Canada of an army of volunteers from that strange place, Ontario, under a British officer who had aspired to the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor the previous year but had lost out to McDougall, raised acute anxiety.

O'Donoghue, who knew all the connotations of "Orange" and of the elevation of Scott to the role of an Orange hero and martyr as Riel never did or could, demanded that Riel recall the men from the buffalo hunt and get ready for resistance. Riel refused.

Bishop Tache, the official commissioner for Canada, continued to assert that the amnesty was assured and the army was peaceful and intended only for police duty.

Pere Richot arrived June 17 with the official report of the negotiations of the delegates with Canada and supporting documents. But he brought no formal amnesty. He explained that when he showed Macdonald the clause in the Bill of Rights about the amnesty with the explanation that it was basic to agreement, Macdonald had taken two days to deliberate and had then explained to Richot that amnesty could not be written into the Manitoba Act as it was administrative and not legislative.

But Macdonald, Cartier, minister of militia, and all other public men concerned; Lord Lisgar, the Governor-General, and Sir Clinton Murdoch,* British Envoy to Canada, had promised Richot that amnesty would be observed. Cartier had also told Richot to tell Riel to carry on his local administration until the arrival of a Lieutenant-Governor for Manitoba, yet to be appointed. But Richot brought no documents to this effect.

Riel had a strong intuition of deceit somewhere. He called a meet-

mg of the Legislature of Assiniboia and they asked Tache to go to Ottawa with all speed, to inquire into the amnesty situation and report to Red River as soon as possible.

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AT OTTAWA, Tache found the Macdonald government at sixes and sevens. There had been agreement about the Manitoba Act but fiery faction in everything else from that point. Cartier, who could be a lion in defence of French Canadian rights, was unwilling to risk his career for Red River Metis. As minister of militia he had prepared and dispatched an armed force under the command of Colonel Wolseley, a British officer seeking a military career in Canada, and composed of 400 well trained British regulars and of 800 volunteers mainly from Ontario and not much trained—they had been easily recruited from the impassioned Ontario population.

When the matter of amnesty was raised by Tache, Macdonald developed a "serious illness" and turned over all matters to Cartier, leader of Quebec members of the ministry as acting Prime Minister. Cartier was already in hot water for ever having favored an amnesty. Tache approached Howe, who replied with a letter to the effect that amnesty was entirely a matter for Her Majesty (through the Governor-General of Canada). Cartier told Tache that Howe's letter was merely to placate his colleagues of Ontario. Cartier had earlier written an argumentative letter to Britain urging amnesty but when the reply came that Britain would accept his advice if it was a formal request, Cartier hastened to reply that it was personal only. He dare not bring such a contentious matter before the divided Canadian ministry.

Cartier now took Bishop Tache to Niagara Falls there to interview Lord Lisgar, the Governor-General and Murdoch, the British envoy to Canada, as Her Majesty's representatives in Canada. In the con-

tinuing frenzy in Ontario, Lisgar displayed great nervousness and merely told Tache that the Acting Prime Minister knew his views, and refused further discussion. The fact of Cartier's sponsoring this presentation of a Roman Catholic prelate from Red River to British high dignitaries, set off a fresh explosion in Ontario where it was interpreted as a plot by Cartier and Tache to have countermanded the sending of the Army to Red River.

Finally Cartier took Tache to General Lindsay, head of the Canadian militia, and they pacified Tache by promising that the new Lieutenant Governor would be a person not unfriendly to the Metis and would be sent quickly via St. Paul so as to arrive there two weeks ahead of Wolseley, who was travelling by the Canadian wilderness route, and be established in full authority when Wolseley should arrive.

Tache wired the gist of this to St. Paul for relay to Red River.

With newspapers and mass meetings all over Ontario screaming, "Shall the Queen's representative travel a thousand miles through a foreign country to demean himself to a murderer and a thief?", "Is the murder of Scott to go unavenged?" and the like. Cartier did appoint Archibald, a man of strength, integrity and fairness of mind as Lieutenant Governor. But Archibald was dispatched behind the army actually—because of Cartier's increasing timidity under the fury of his colleagues of Ontario.

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ON the day that Tache was in Niagara Falls, there arrived in Red River, Lieutenant Butler, dispatch officer for Wolseley, sent ahead from Lake Superior territory which the army now had reached, to post Wolseley's proclamations that his mission was peaceful. Butler assumed a haughty attitude and required the President of the Legislature of Assiniboia to wait upon him. This Riel accepted calmly. He waited upon Butler and told him that Red River would receive

the army on its "peace mission" with a friendly welcome and that he, the President, would resign his authority to the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba immediately upon the latter's arrival. Wolseley's proclamations posted in all the villages allayed public anxiety. Riel took them at their face value.

But O'Donoghue and many others could not share Riel's trust. They wanted to send spies to the Army to find out whether it carried an amnesty—a matter which Riel had not taken up with Butler, who was only a lieutenant in rank, because it would have been a breach of etiquette—and if the reports were what they suspected was the situation, to prepare for resistance, not in Red River but in the wilds where they knew every good spot for ambuscade.

Chatelaine, an Indian chief whose tribe was trailing Wolseley, had sent a message that he would set logs afloat in a long canyon on the Winnipeg river through which Wolseley's forces must pass by canoe, and drown the entire force with ease, his sharp shooters picking off any who did happen to escape. It was quite practical. But Riel forbade all such ideas and took measures to restrain the Indians.

Rumors came that Donald A. Smith was with Wolseley. This evoked fresh suspicions.

Then O'Donoghue, in defiance of Riel, raised a small force of his own and set out independently—he did not mind involving Indians. Riel prevented this by sending a larger force after him to compel his return. Riel was determined that whatever happened, Red River should supply no excuse for Wolseley to deny amnesty.

Bishop Tache did not return until August 23. He immediately summoned the Council to his palace and assured them Wolseley was yet some distance away, that when he would arrive he would be under precise orders, and they had nothing whatever to fear. But while he was yet speaking a scout rushed in with the

news that Wolseley had passed the lower fort and was approaching Fort Garry. Riel turned away from the Bishop in disdain.

Returned to Fort Garry, Riel received reports from reliable scouts that Wolseley's plan was to "capture by surprise" Fort Garry where Riel and his colleagues would be waiting to receive him, and capture or kill Riel in the "battle." Unusually heavy rains that afternoon prevented Wolseley from reaching the Fort that night.

Next morning, Riel, members of the Council and several leading citizens assembled at the Fort, received hurried warning that Wolseley was in sight and that his intentions were to kill them; they should leave at once. Riel waited until the advance forces were in sight, then ordered the evacuation of the Fort and its abandonment to Wolseley. Having seen this completed in ship-shape fashion, he and three others in personal danger passed over the river.

They made their way secretly to the border, pausing first however at the palace of the Bishop who continued in the delusion that Wolseley's expedition was peaceful. They spoke to him shortly and ironically. Riel succeeded in reaching safety at St. Joseph, across the border, where he had family relatives.

A freighter who met him on the way carried word back to Red River that Riel said to him, "Tell them that he who ruled in Fort Garry a few days ago is now a homeless wanderer with nothing to eat but two dried suckers."

In 295 days he had united the factions of Red River, tutored and practised them in representative, responsible government of themselves by themselves, created for future government a constitutional framework providing free institutions in the tradition of Britain and of Canada itself, safeguarding the rights of every faction and section, upon which had been based the Manitoba Act of 1870 and all succeeding Provincial creations, main-

tained order until Canadian authority should arrive, made formal arrangements for its hospitable reception and for his own resignation to it. Now he found himself betrayed.

At 26, penniless, he was in flight to forced exile.

The provincial government of Ontario was soon to offer, by unanimous vote, a reward of \$5,000 for his capture.

Chapter Twelve

Appeal to President Grant

WHOEVER in Red River felt any doubt that Riel's flight into exile was unnecessary, knew better later in the afternoon when Colonel Wolseley addressed his troops in public at Fort Garry. Wolseley's proclamations were still pasted up on walls and posts in each village, reading "Our mission is one of peace . . . The force will enter your province representing no party either in religion or politics, and will offer equal protection to the lives of all races and creeds."

Wolseley's voice now rang out to this effect: "The leaders of the banditti, who recently oppressed Her Majesty's loyal subjects in Red River, having fled as you advanced to the Fort, you have not therefore had an opportunity in gaining glory." — Glory being victory in battle.

So clear was his intimation that "battle" had been planned, that the people of the settlement were badly frightened. But Col. Wolseley could find no excuse to impose martial law, and he immediately proceeded to establish the army's power. Wolseley on his own responsibility re-established the formal authority of the Hudson's Bay Company, with Donald A. Smith appointed as interim Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba.

That Riel had been the keystone of union of the factions was demonstrated by the rapidity with which factions recovered their sense of opposed interests, and some of Riel's own Metis followers, recovering from their first fright, shouldered each other aside to curry favor with the new regime. Several Metis even went so far to further their own personal security as to offer Wolseley plans and information for Riel's further betrayal. English-speaking natives, whose interests Riel had protected and conserved, sometimes at the cost of his own popularity, recanted openly and welcomed the

troops — who disdained them as "half-breeds" or as "inferior" whites, foreigners to Canada.

Observing the population to be thus cowed and currying, Wolseley presently relaxed the discipline of his troops and permitted off-duty time to his Ontario volunteers who used it to explore the personnel of the villages, with increasing street affrays and display by the volunteers of personal sense of power. Lack of discipline was fairly well developed among the volunteers when Wolseley and his British regulars left Red River on September 10, two days before the arrival of Lieu-

tenant-Governor Archibald. With his departure, the volunteers asserted their power to an extent that the officers left in control could not exert effective command, and the volunteers ran wild to wreak Ontario's vengeance upon the French-speaking Metis.

Four "loyalists," two of whom were Ontario volunteers and two previous Winnipeggers, identified Elzéar Goulet as a member of the Scott firing squad, rushed him into the river and stoned him to death from the banks, no one daring to interfere.

The state of affairs which Archibald found and which he continued to endure helplessly for some time, he described in a report to the Canadian Government, "Many of the half-breeds were so beaten and outraged that they feel in slavery. The oppressors seem to feel as if French half-breeds should be wiped from the face of the globe."

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WHEN military discipline was somewhat restored, the volunteers resorted to devices of "law and order," swearing out warrants for the arrest of each and every Red River person or group toward whom they had developed a spite or whom they identified as persons actually or probably active in the former

regime. Archibald met this as best he could by refusing to sign such warrants.

Several attempts to punish the known killers of Goulet came to nothing.

Tache, under suspicion for misrepresentation and smarting at loss of prestige among his own people, bombarded the Canadian ministers in Ottawa for an amnesty, going so far as to threaten Cartier with a full disclosure of all that had passed between them and between Tache and other cabinet ministers; but he got nowhere.

Archibald deprecated this activity as futile—it merely raised up the factional feuds within the cabinet, and prevented Archibald from getting action himself. Until conditions were less confused and feelings were cooler he could not proceed with the full implementation of the Manitoba Act, call provincial elections, and procure duly elected advisers. In this he saw clearly that Riel could be a very useful factor, but how Riel could participate was unclear. Uproar must be reduced by a wearing out process.

Riel himself was also watching the situation from St. Joseph across the border and seeing Archibald's fairness renewed his hope that peace might yet be made with Ottawa somehow. Surely he had but to remain loyal and the truth would seep through.

On September 17-18 Riel and Lepine returned in secret to a meeting of their colleagues to discuss next steps. About forty ventured to attend.

O'Donoghue, with his acute sense of the significance of Ontario's tumults and his awareness of the weak military position of Archibald, advanced the resolution that they appeal to President Grant of the United States for annexation by the United States. A noisy propaganda for annexation had been carried on for ten years and more from St. Paul, supported by a small American group in the settlement. Riel had discovered it on his return to Red River and had rejected every advance as it came. American rail-

way interests had tempted him with tremendous bribes, but he had never fallen into any such traps, and had persuaded his Metis colleagues not to.

But now many Metis, seeing betrayal on all sides and even, so they suspected, from their church, were ready to consider O'Donoghue's schemes. Riel instantly set his face against it. But with all his influence the best he could get was the modification of proposals for annexation into a resolution soliciting the help of President Grant to exert American influence in their behalf, and with this resolution and authorization as a delegate, O'Donoghue set out for Washington.

There he did get an interview with President Grant, and altering the resolution according to his own notions, advanced proposals for annexation. Grant told him shortly, in effect, that he was not interested in Red River inhabitants' problems and would do nothing even if he were.

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RIEL and Lepine resumed their exile, and the winter dragged through in Red River with the people in the deepest despondency they had ever known, the Metis in particular forced to live as outcasts, in danger of arrest on specious charges of murder, treason and what not.

The Canadian Government paid Smith instantly, and it compensated Schultz in particular for the losses he asserted he had sustained in Red River—loss of his warehouse, goods, etc.—and his various associates to only a little less extent.

The grant of land to the Metis was withheld without explanation. It was supposed to be in the hope that Metis families would desert in large numbers and betake themselves to the wilds beyond the area of the grants. Hudson's Bay Company received its grants of land immediately and was able to make its locations. The Company was at this time much less active in the fur trade, which dislocated the local economy; the buffalo were being rapidly reduced on the American

side of the border to assist homesteading; and steamboat lines were established by Canadians, on Red River, cutting into Metis freighting business.

Riel and his colleagues were presently confronted with extra danger, exposing them to betrayal by any and every venal individual in the country and even across the border.

Edward Blake, Ontario leader, fought the Ontario election on the race, language and religion issue, highlighted and individualized by the Scott affair as it was understood there. Immediately the new Legislature assembled, the members with but one exception — and that one on a legal point — passed a measure offering a reward of \$5,000 for the capture of the "murderers of Thomas Scott."

It was a huge reward by the economic standards of the day. Riel returned to Red River as now being safer than in the United States, where he might be kidnapped and delivered direct to Ontario authorities, and went quietly to his home in St. Vital where he had some protection in Archibald's tactics of ignoring warrants, and where Archibald took what measures he could to discourage intercourse between villages.

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LIEUTENANT Governor Archibald of Manitoba issued a proclamation early in October, 1871, calling for "all loyal subjects to rally round the flag of their common country" to prepare resistance to invasion by Fenians.

Fenians were malcontents of Irish origin in the United States who had a few years before attempted invasions of Ontario in some strength and had been met and defeated at several points. Ontario for many years afterward was proud of the valor of its citizens, who had repelled the Fenians and gave great honor to the military officers who led them.

The United States Government had not entirely clamped down on the Fenian organization which still maintained an open official centre



Metis Martyr

Elzéar Goulet, a Riel stalwart, met death in the turbulent days that followed the arrival in the Red River settlement of Wolseley's Ontario volunteers. A group of the volunteers and Winnipeg Canadian "Loyalists" threw Goulet into the Red River and stoned him to death from the banks. Goulet had been a member of the Thomas Scott firing squad.

in New York and retained considerable quantities of arms in secret caches.

When O'Donoghue's interview with President Grant proved of no profit, he resorted to the Fenian organization at its official centre where he contacted a General O'Neil.

To this Fenian official he outlined a grandiose conception of his own thinking that the Fenians go into action to seize Manitoba, whose ties with Canada had only just been established and where large numbers of the local population were disaffected.

He described the prolonged propaganda for annexation of this area

to the United States, which had been carried on from St. Paul, supported by various American railway interests and others who stood to gain. He expressed the belief that he could raise a considerable force within Manitoba to reinforce whatever volunteers might be raised in Minnesota from among recently unemployed construction workers, and he felt it likely that if they could seize key points in Manitoba by armed force, so many American interests would approve of annexation that the American Government could be brought to make an American claim permanent.

General O'Neil was fired by the vision, got possession of a quantity of Fenian arms, and the pair set out for Minnesota, where, in a small town near the border, O'Donoghue created upon paper the "Republic of Rupert's Land."

By September 15, he had his plans well laid and had started propaganda over the border, addressing himself to many Metis whose loyalty to Riel had been disturbed by Wolseley's success over him. The dejected Metis were shortly discovered by Riel, Lepine and others to be giving this proposal serious attention. The Metis population had the numerical strength to seize Manitoba even without assistance from outside. Archibald had only a token military force and could not hope to muster enough strength from the English-speaking inhabitants to make effective resistance.

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O'DONOGHUE'S inclinations to Fenianism had been an embarrassment to Riel during his Red River leadership, and on numerous occasions he had taken pains to express his disapproval and to prevent any such thing developing among his following. But now he saw much more than sentiment at stake: if even a small number of Metis were enticed by O'Donoghue, that would be the end of any hope of amnesty.

Riel called a quiet meeting of about forty leading Metis, September 20, and after a long debate

brought them to the firm resolution that whether O'Donoghue proved weak or strong, they would not join him and would immediately work throughout the parishes to bring all Metis to pronounce themselves in favor of what had been obtained by the Manitoba Act and to express any grievances they had only in moderate demands for redress. This was followed by quiet meetings in all parishes with such effect that almost immediately O'Donoghue, from a position of strength, felt his influence upon the Metis declining.

O'Donoghue, who had broken with Riel over the appeal to President Grant, had meant to run this show alone—he was to be future president of the Republic of Rupert's Land. But he reconsidered at this point. He knew that if Louis came in with him they could win easily at least an initial victory. On Monday, October 2, Riel, Lepine and the others received an official invitation from O'Donoghue to participate in the projected invasion. All ignored it except Baptiste Lepine and Andre Nault, who announced they would go as spies to bring back information.

Lieutenant - Governor Archibald had got wind of O'Donoghue's plot and was alarmed. He had almost no military organization and would have to depend upon local volunteers hastily assembled, and as these would have to bring arms and their own horses and food, he was not at all sure what the response would be. His only course was to issue a proclamation and offer a clear invitation to the Metis to come to his support. This proclamation was, as it happened, simultaneous with O'Donoghue's invitation to Louis and Lepine. Archibald hastened to Pere Richot to solicit the help of Riel.

Pere Richot replied that if Riel did consent, he would be running a great risk of being killed or betrayed by "loyalists" with whom he would have to be associated. Richot felt that Riel might well stay out of it "unless this proceeding is looked upon with favor by Your Excellency."

On the night of October 3, the Metis held a council of leaders and by a vote of 12 to 1—the one being in favor of neutrality—resolved to unite with the Canadian forces in a joint resistance. On October 5, Archibald issued a formal announcement stating that should Riel come forward his liberty would not be interfered with and his help would be appreciated.

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THAT same day Nault and Lepine arrived from their visit to O'Donoghue's camp with the report that O'Donoghue was confident of putting 3,500 men into the invasion, and that his plans were to capture the Company's fort near Pembina the next day, and make it headquarters for further penetration. The Metis held public meetings all over the parishes that night.

Late that night, Archibald received news that O'Donoghue himself had been captured near Pembina the previous day, but that the proposed attack was only a feint and that the main attack would come from St. Joseph, where Fenians were massed.

Archibald sent Colonel Irvine with what volunteers he had been able to enlist among the Canadians toward the border.

By Sunday Riel and his colleagues had assembled between 400 and 500 men armed and one-third mounted for Archibald's formal inspection, with assurances that many more were being organized.

Meantime Colonel Irvine received

a report en route to the border that the raid was to be renewed; and on Sunday morning he sent a request for refreshments of 150 men, which created sharp alarm in Winnipeg.

But the Metis did not march. Colonel Irvine returned Monday morning, October 9, with the news that the invasion had proven a fiasco. What had happened was that O'Donoghue and 35 men with high officer insignia had dashed across from Dakota and taken possession of the fort three miles inside the Canadian border; and that less than four hours later a detachment of U.S. soldiers had crossed the border and captured "all the generals and ten of the army." They were shortly discharged. No one from Red River was with them.

The Lieutenant-Governor was relieved. He reported to the Canadian Government that "if the half-breeds had taken a different course, the province would not now be in our possession" (i.e. if they had swung to Donoghue.)

But no appreciation was expressed in Ottawa, and this report was not opened to publicity. The Metis were not recompensed for their efforts or expense in any way.

Riel was gratified to discover that he had raised a larger force than the Lieutenant-Governor had been able to rally among the English-speaking and larger than the Lieutenant-Governor could have raised himself among the Metis. Despite the neglect and harsh persecutions he still held their loyalty firmly, when he was free.

Chapter Thirteen

Elected to Parliament

NEITHER Riel's loyalty to Manitoba nor the visible strength he had been able to put into the expression of it in the Fenian incident received the slightest appreciation from Ottawa nor was it given the slightest publicity anywhere. Instead, Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Cartier, his Quebec co-leader, sent Archbishop Tache to Red River with the "request" that Riel and Lepine leave the country "for a while."

The reason was that a Dominion election was to be held in 1872 and the Prime Minister and his colleagues wanted to deprive Ontario newspapers and Liberal candidates of the opportunity to make capital against the government that "the murderers of Thomas Scott" were at liberty and unpunished. Money would be given Riel and Lepine for their "expenses."

Riel was indignant and scornful. "I am sure I would be killing myself in the estimation of my friends if I should leave, because they would say that I have been bought and I am not in the market," he said. "I will accept no favor from the Canadian Government until our dangers are settled."

The Archbishop urged: "I pressed the question of amnesty upon the Prime Minister. Sir John assured me in these words: 'If you succeed in keeping Riel out of the country for a while, I will make his case mine, and I will carry the point.'"

Amnesty: Without it, the Metis leaders were living like outcasts even in Red River, their home, protected from persecution and prosecution only by the thin screen of legal technicalities employed by Archibald to prevent their being arrested and hauled into court on trumped up charges several times a month, and with only distance and Archibald's sympathy to protect Riel from any greedy person's interest in reaching for the Ontario government's rich reward of \$5,000 for his capture.

The Manitoba Legislature had made strong protest of Ontario's interference and had sent an urgent request to Britain for clemency. No notice had been taken. While Archibald could protect them from false warrants, he was unable to prevent physical assaults — only nine days after the Fenian incident nine masked men had made a night raid on the house of Riel's mother—and kidnap was a constant threat.

Amnesty: The Archbishop, as the Prime Minister's official commissioner to Manitoba, had been promising it from Macdonald for over two years. But if Macdonald withheld amnesty he was less punitive than the Liberals who had put a price upon Riel's head and agitated furiously that he be hanged.

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RIEL asked for time to consider. Amnesty was important not merely to himself but to all his colleagues. If he refused this preposterous "request" all suffered with him. Next day he surrendered but with open expression of his sense of shame and profound feeling of degradation. He took pains to make the Archbishop's part clear to everybody—he required him to write a letter which would be a document of clear command; and he required that the amount of \$1,000 which Macdonald and Cartier had confided to the Archbishop should be paid to him formally and publicly in the Chapel at St. Vital.

The Archbishop wrote the letter—it became a document for posterity—and the money was given Riel as a sack of gold in the Chapel. To his friend Dubuc (later to be a celebrated judge in Manitoba) he turned and said as the bag was put into his hand: "If the one who wants me to go away was here, and if I were to treat him as he is trying to treat me, this little bag of gold ought to go through his head."

Tache, Archibald, and Donald A.

Smith decided that £800 in all should be provided for the support of the two families in the absence of their men. Smith, representing the Hudson's Bay Company as banker, advanced the balance of the money on the promise of the others that the Canadian Government would repay the Company. (The Company had difficulty in collecting the money and was obliged to wait several years before the debt was paid. When it was settled, interest was paid.)

Riel could not foresee that what Macdonald would say on public platforms was to be, "I wish to God I could catch him." The agreement was not exposed for two years, a delay which permitted Macdonald to declare that the blame for Riel's departure lay with Ontario Liberals who by their reward had "frightened" Riel.

Riel's health broke down under the nervous strain of his exile, and this probably resulted in the stomach disturbances which later plagued him severely.

In exile he reconsidered carefully and fully the condition of his people and the fate that awaited them. In deep discouragement he could see no safety for them. For all this time he had trusted to others with influence at Ottawa. The result was that they were further from justice now than when they had received the first deceitful promises of amnesty. He decided that he would trust others no longer but would go to Ottawa and make the fight himself. He would seek election to the House of Commons and there demand the justice that had been so long denied his people.

He kept his promise to Tache to remain away until after the elections in the east but he came home in time for the deferred elections in ridings of Manitoba which were too far distant for elections simultaneously with the main one.

In the riding of Provencher, sparsely settled with Metis, he solicited nomination. He was opposed by a tempestuous French-Canadian named Clarke, the first premier of Manitoba, the sort of

man who in the course of the campaign challenged him to duel at 12 paces.

But suddenly Archbishop Tache appeared again. It was not to quell the rough proceedings of the hustings, but to require both candidates to withdraw to give Sir George Cartier of Quebec an acclamation. Cartier had been defeated in Montreal and the ministry required a safe seat for him.

Amnesty again. Both Tache and Archibald told him that this last help would put the entire government under such obligation to him that they would be compelled to grant it. Riel bargained. He asked for the rectification of certain grievances of minor importance but a trouble to Manitoba farmers. He had been placed in nomination but withdrew at the last moment. Cartier got the coveted acclamation.

But Cartier died soon after and his successor in the Ministry, Langevin, recognized no obligation.

Then Lieutenant-Governor Archibald retired and was succeeded by Morris who was less sympathetic to the Metis and less inclined to use technicalities to protect them against warrants of arrest.

In the autumn of 1873 Ambrose Lepine was arrested—on the charge of murder; of Thomas Scott of course. Lepine had been the one member of the tribunal most against the execution of Scott; but he had been Riel's right hand associate always. At the same time a warrant was issued against Riel on the same charge. Riel went into hiding in the wilderness outside Fort Garry.

Tache wired Langevin threatening complete exposure of the government if some action for amnesty were not taken. Langevin protested that the government was not responsible for the warrants and pleaded for Tache to reconsider his rash threat.

While in this concealment, with a warrant out charging him with murder, with many enemies seeking his capture in the hope of reaping the rich reward of Ontario of \$5,000, the electors of Provencher nominated Riel for the vacancy in the

riding caused by the death of Cartier, discouraged opposition, and elected him by acclamation to the Canadian House of Commons.

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RIEL set out for Ottawa immediately after his election. Parliament had been in session for some time, but he hoped to present himself before the close of the session.

He had no illusions about his danger. The warrant was out for his arrest; the Ontario government's offer of \$5,000 for his capture was a temptation to cupidity anywhere along his route; just three years earlier the delegates from Red River invited to Ottawa by the Canadian Government and under its protection had been arrested in Ottawa charged with Scott's murder, had been insulted, mobbed, threatened with lynching; and even Archbishop Tache on a visit to the Governor-General in the company of the acting Prime Minister had felt himself in danger. Since then two bitter elections had been fought in the east centered on the symbol of Scott, and fires of religious and race animosity were raised to fury.

But he believed that once inside the House of Commons he could tell his story and when it was heard win justice.

But for getting safely to the House of Commons he had no considered plan. In St. Paul he consulted a kind priest, Father Ireland, whom he had come to know in his enforced exile. Father Ireland advised him to go to Keeseville, a small town on the shore of Lake Champlain, in New York State, where a Father Barbare would give him hospitality, and from there plan his course to Ottawa.

News came to him in Keeseville of the fall of the Macdonald government and dissolution of Parliament. French Canadian Conservative members of the Macdonald cabinet, who had shown no feeling of kinship with the Metis, had reacted fiercely to the blaze of hatred in Ontario for Roman Catholics and the French language and had revolted against Macdonald; and other

political interests had demanded amnesty for the Metis.

Langevin had argued that clemency should come from Britain, but this was specious because the British had made known that they would take the advice of the Canadian cabinet. Langevin's idea was that Macdonald should make a trip to Britain after which a declaration of amnesty from London might overawe Ontario. However the plan came to nothing as other contentious issues threatened the defeat of the government and Macdonald resigned. He was succeeded by Alexander Mackenzie who had been a member of the Liberal Ontario government at the moment when the reward of \$5,000 had been resolved upon.

"I am suffering from a bad situation," Riel wrote his mother from Keeseville, "With the help of Providence I will not go back to Manitoba before I have set foot in the House of Commons and we have an amnesty."

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HIS health was threatening. Early in 1874 he went secretly to Montreal to consult a physician there and was given hospitality by the Masson family who had been his patrons when he was at Montreal College but had shown no interest in his activities in Red River and they hid him in their home for a time.

Riel consulted Dr. Lachapelle about his health. Dr. Lachapelle was friendly with many young French Canadian Liberals who were gaining influence and through this contact Riel acquired some friends.

Riel was also concerned about his re-election in Provencher. Dorion, Quebec Liberal co-leader with Mackenzie, had wired Archbishop Tache to prevent Riel from becoming a candidate. Tache gave an angry reply pointing out that Riel was two hours distant from Dorion but eight days from him; but he did indicate to Dorion the name of a priest who might know Riel's exact whereabouts.

However Riel was nominated in

Provencher in his absence. He was opposed by a half-breed named Hamelin, but obtained seventy-five percent of the votes.

He got safely to Ottawa, March 28, 1874, the day before the formal opening of the new parliament, and hid away in a convent in Hull, across the river, on the advice of his friends who had discovered that Clarke, his former opponent in Provencher (he of the duel at 12 paces) was in Ottawa, lying in wait with a warrant for Riel's arrest which Clarke had not been brave enough to execute in Red River.

Riel was not satisfied with this policy of secrecy but he reluctantly gave way to the advice of his friends that he remain in hiding until the temper of the new House of Commons had been explored.

The temper was not promising. His friends thought there might be risk even in his signing the roll. Eugene Fiset, contemporary with Riel at Montreal College, now member for Rimouski, delayed his own signing until March 31 and then conducted Riel surreptitiously to the offices of the Clerk of the House in a quiet period shortly before noon, distracted the Clerk a little and slipped Riel ahead of him to sign, signed himself immediately afterwards and both quitted the room before the Clerk noticed the name "Louis Riel."

The news of Riel's presence in the buildings created greater excitement and consternation than any of the rare sensations that in that period marked sessions of the House—more intense excitement than the downfall of Macdonald; or than the fist fight later between Macdonald and Donald A. Smith—when Macdonald declared that he "could lick Smith quicker than hell could scorch a feather."

The House of Commons which assembled that afternoon was electric. Spectators in the galleries and members on the floor waited in intense curiosity—they had been nourished by the Ontario press to imagine a swarthy giant who would burst through the doors in buckskin

and feathers and shoot up the house; the very least that many expected was an uncouthed figure with black hair in braids, gibbering in frontier French. Neither Thomas Moss of Toronto, nor Wilfred Laurier, orators that they were, could hold the attention of the House that afternoon.

But Riel did not appear. He had reluctantly accepted the advice of the only friends he had, who had plans laid otherwise. In retrospect, it seems to have been a mistake. At that moment the House might have been swept off its feet in astonishment at the handsome, well dressed, dignified figure Riel would have cut—addressing the House eloquently in fluent, correct English.

What happened that day, which was not in the plan of his friends, was that the House summoned the extravagant, venomous Clarke, Riel's first opponent in Provencher, to inform the members officially of the warrant he had for the arrest of the member for Provencher. Under questioning he recited all his own personal grievances, including his challenge to a duel at 12 paces. The House resolved that Riel should appear in his place April 9, which would be after the Easter recess.

Next day, Donald A. Smith, from his seat in the House, introduced a motion for the appointment of "a committee to inquire into the difficulties which existed in the North West in 1869-70, and into the reasons which have retarded the granting of an amnesty announced in the Proclamation issued by the Governor-General of Canada, Sir John Young; and further to inquire whether and to what extent other promises have been made." The motion led to a debate, but was carried on division.

Riel's friends were pleased with this outcome and decided to mass all their efforts in presenting a strong case before this committee. They prevailed upon Riel to make no appearance until the result of this inquiry which, they hoped,

would justify his people and clear himself.

By that arrangement Riel could not give his own testimony before that committee. His forensic powers (he was not yet thirty) were far greater then than when, past forty,

he demonstrated gifts of eloquence unusual in more famous men. Instead, he remained in seclusion throughout the Easter recess to prepare his case for presentation by his friends to the Committee of Inquiry.

Chapter Fourteen

Expelled from Parliament

WHILE Riel remained in seclusion in Hull, working upon the preparation of his case to the Committee of Inquiry, the Liberal Mackenzie government, under the delusion that his appearance in Ottawa was a cleverly designed Conservative plot to embarrass it, made no attempt to disturb him where he was. Instead they made a feint of searching for him high and low, with a great public clamor and confusion.

When Parliament assembled after the Easter recess, Clarke was again at the bar of the House, dramatically waving anonymous letters threatening "revenge" and pressing his warrant for the arrest of Riel for the Scott murder. Two policemen summoned to the bar reported that they had searched everywhere for Louis Riel without success. Riel's name was called loudly all over the building, even in the basements and attics. But no one responded.

Without waiting for the report of the Committee of Inquiry, on April 15 Mackenzie Bowell, a leading member of the Conservative party and for many years Sovereign Grand Master of the Orange Order in British North America, introduced a motion that "whereas Louis Riel" had not "obeyed an order of the House to attend in his place on April 9" and also "whereas Riel had been charged with murder" and had "fled from justice" he be expelled the House.

Two amendments were immediately offered: one that the motion be not considered until the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the troubles of 1869-70 and into the delay of amnesty had been received; and the other that an address be presented to Her Majesty praying for amnesty.

The debate raged for two days and the votes cut across party lines. The second amendment, offered by a French Canadian Conservative, was supported by 27 French Canadian Conservatives and a few west-

ern members. The first, offered by a Quebec Liberal supporter of the government of the day was defeated by 117 to 76. The main motion for expulsion was carried by 124 to 68.

Sir Richard Cartwright, who sat in the House, wrote many years later in his *Reminiscences*, that the vote was remarkable in Canadian history. "Not only was it unusually large—194 out of a little over 200—but every French and almost every Catholic member voted against expulsion, and every Protestant and almost every English member voted for it," the exceptions being certain English representing Quebec French ridings and a few Maritime members. "I can recall no other occasion on which party lines were so completely obliterated and racial and religious feeling so strongly in evidence."

Yet Louis Riel had had no help from Quebec and the Metis were conscious of themselves as a separate entity; and Louis Riel had not hesitated to take his own line, often without the approval of higher dignitaries of the church to which his attachment was hereditary, and Riel and many Metis were three generations removed from Quebec. Events in Red River were unknown to the east; Louis Riel had been made into a symbol, as had Thomas Scott, without regard for actual happenings.

EXPULSION from the House of Commons was not banishment from the country. Amnesty remained an issue. Louis was disappointed but not overwhelmed by his first reverse. He was puzzled by the action of French Liberals supporting delay rather than amnesty. He was elated that there was to be an investigation and confident that the findings would justify amnesty. Some such report in 1870 might have commanded attention, but by 1874 mass feeling had been fixed in two

bitter elections concentrated upon two symbols—Riel and Scott.

Tache took two days to tell his story. And he withheld nothing. He revealed secret negotiations, personal private correspondence with Ministers and Prime Minister, intimate interviews and secret understandings.

Pere Richot, Sir Clinton Murdoch and Archibald all testified and answered searching questions. Dennis was fair and said that the primary cause of the Red River activities was the unsettled feeling in the minds of the people as to the form of government, a general anxiety that their interests would be sacrificed and the omission of the government to consult with or reassure them.

The unfriendly witnesses gave no evidence reflecting upon Riel. Sir John A. Macdonald had an unclear memory as to his communications with Tache but neither did he reflect upon Riel.

Schultz and McDougall did not appear at all. Lynch offered the opinion that the trouble was fomented by a conspiracy of priests but offered no supporting evidence and admitted he had never witnessed that influence in action.

With many days' evidence gathered, the members of the committee were too divided by their political partisanship to pass any judgment. They submitted the voluminous report of a huge volume of evidence, to the House without advice or suggestions. The House was not capable of handling it in that form. Nothing more could be done that session.

Riel was puzzled. He did not realize that the Ontario public had convicted him and his people years before, of the sin of speaking French, being Roman Catholic and having Indian blood—they supposed a full fifty percent. Ontario swung Liberal because the Macdonald government had committed the degradation of making concessions to despised half-breeds, especially French, and negotiating through priests. This was beyond Riel's comprehension.

Riel remained in Hull until the close of the session, returned to Montreal for a few days, and then proceeded to Keeseville. His expulsion from Parliament caused a vacancy in Provencher, to be filled by a bye-election. In that interest he returned to Montreal where he was told that a M. Royal of the Manitoba government, had written to Montreal friends that he and Tache wanted a candidate other than Riel. Riel wrote in protest to Abbe Dugas, an old and much respected priest who had for many years been a close friend of the Riel family. No further opposition developed and Riel was again returned by acclamation.

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MEANTIME Ambrose Lepine was tried in Manitoba in October and found guilty of the murder of Scott, and sentenced to be hanged January 29. He had been out on bail for several delays of trial. This forced the Mackenzie government to take some definite action as to Riel on a similar charge.

Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General, conceived a device to relieve Canadian politicians of their psychological impasses—he suggested that he review the evidence and pass judgment. His suggestion was accepted.

Dufferin turned in a ponderous review to the Colonial Secretary in Britain. Believing that a policy of moderation and reasonableness would assist the Canadian public he advised reducing the sentence of death for Lepine to two years imprisonment. On the suggestion of the Secretary of State for the Colonies he added the deprivation of civil rights, which would keep Lepine out of any Canadian government. Riel, Dufferin recommended, should receive similar treatment.

The Canadian public did not respond to reasonableness and moderation. Ontario shouted that it spared the lives of murderers with hands reeking with blood; Quebec that it sent patriots to prison and excluded them from Parliament.

Mackenzie found it necessary to

take definite action when Parliament resumed. He introduced a motion for the banishment of Riel, Lepine and O'Donoghue, the first two to be granted right to return after five years.

It was one of the most unusual motions that ever found a place in Canadian records, many thousands of words in length, and including much of the report of the Committee of Inquiry in a different order. The debate was partisan and the debaters chiefly interested in party criticisms of each other. The House now divided on strictly party lines—the Quebec Liberals supporting the motion as reasonable compromise, the Quebec Conservatives demanding complete amnesty, Ontario Conservatives calling for the death sentence and Ontario Liberals supporting without special arguments.

The Quebec Conservatives brought in an amnesty amendment which received 23 votes against 152. The Mackenzie motion was carried on a full party division.

Curiously in the case of Lepine the authority of the Canadian Parliament was simultaneously ignored and interpreted as having priority over the local court's sentence that he be hanged. Lepine himself preferred Lord Dufferin's justice of two years in prison and deprivation of civil rights (i.e. rights to participate in politics) to either hanging or banishment for five years from his home and family; and the Manitoba authorities unostentatiously arranged to oblige him. He served two years in prison and on his release continued to live in Manitoba.

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RIEL was overwhelmed by the sentence of banishment. It destroyed all hope for his people which had been the inspiration of his life, crushed his spirit and undermined his health. He was only twenty-nine years old, and he was driven from his family, penniless and friendless.

He was the first person to be banished from the Dominion of Canada.

He reflected bitterly that his ancestors for seven generations before him, from 1704, had lived in the country without a blemish on their family record, had been pioneers and patriots, loyal to constituted authority and institutions, that the Riels of Lower Canada had remained faithful to the British Crown in times of crisis when a population to the south, of British descent, had revolted against their British King, that his grandfather Jean Baptiste Riel VI had blazed the trail to the North West and his grandmother Marie Ann Gaboury had dared the wilds when no other white woman would venture into them. He himself had brought free institutions to Manitoba, established and protected the rights of minorities and endangered the freedom of no minority in doing so.

Riel remained in Montreal for a few weeks, trying to puzzle out just why it had happened. It was difficult for him to grasp that the seeming sympathy of French Canadians in Quebec had been merely a reaction in the frenzied prejudice of Ontario, and did not rise from sympathy with his cause or his people. A Montreal newspaper published the short history of the Metis people that he hastily wrote in an effort to inform the public; but it created no interest. Then he wearily left Canada, an aimless wanderer.

Father Barbare at Keeseville sheltered him while he considered where to go and what to do. He was a sweet and gentle protector, warm with personal sympathy. Always deeply devout, although sometimes heterodox, Riel turned ardently to religious consolation and displayed a mysticism which had been latent in himself but strongly exhibited in his maternal forebears; and this was cultivated by all who took any interest in him, among them Bishop Bourget, whose letters Riel interpreted as sanctifying Riel's mystical sense of a Divine mission.

Presently, temporarily recovered in bodily strength, he left the home of Father Barbare to seek whatever work he could find in the midst of

a serious economic depression. Too humiliated by his circumstances to attempt what otherwise might have been appropriate ventures, he sought day-labor and even that was difficult to find. From Worcester, where he spent part of the summer of 1875, he wrote his mother that by prayer alone the Metis would be able to survive. "Let my political friends all pray," he wrote, "and have their children pray that God may keep the little Metis nation, that it may be great and faithful to its mission, for it has one, and a beautiful one. The obstacle it meets is proof of it . . . During my five years of exile that is all I have to say to the Metis."

He wandered from city to city wherever work might be sought. For some weeks he was a day laborer on the streets of Albany. From there he drifted on, taking any such jobs that he found, until in early December, under-nourished, ill-clad and over-wrought, he went to Washington. There on December 8 he attended the ceremony of the feast of the Immaculate Conception at St. Patrick's Cathedral and in a moment of exaltation during the singing of Gloria in Excelsis he thought he had a heavenly vision. He was discovered in a feverish condition by Edmond Mallet, a French-Canadian holding an office in the Department of the Interior of the U.S. government, and Mallet, after some inquiry, suggested that he return to his Montreal adviser, Dr. Lachapelle, and gave him assistance for the journey.

DR. Lachapelle could not risk treating Riel at large, and he arranged for his hiding in Longue Pointe Asylum, where Riel was registered under the name of Louis R. David (Louis' friend Dubuc had given him this name "David" while he was in hiding outside Fort Garry, in reference to what Dubuc said was the similarity of Louis' situation with that of David before he became King of Jerusalem). This retreat was chosen because it was the only place where he could be safely near his doctor.

The asylum staff members did not consider him insane and declined to support that idea later, but instead wrote emphatically to members of the Macdonald government that he was not of unsound mind, but was in a state of mental depression, and nervous and physical collapse. Three months later he was transferred to Beaufort Asylum where he was registered as La Rochelle, and here the medical superintendent, Dr. Rolf, formed the opinion that he suffered "megalomania" and was of unsound mind. But he enjoyed, incognito, some amount of liberty outside and while he was guest of a friendly cure near Quebec, Wilfred Laurier met him.

Laurier was much impressed by the vigor and personality of Riel, and found him surprisingly fluent and on the whole well informed on European and American politics (see Skelton's "Life of Laurier"). When religion was touched upon Riel became excited and jumbled and spoke of his visions and "mission." He was discharged from Beaufort January 23, 1878, with a warning he should avoid excitement, live in the open, and take the utmost care of his health.

He remained a few weeks in Montreal and then revisited Father Barbare in Keeseville.

There he found romance.

LOUIS had known no women intimately except his family relatives, when he left Red River for Montreal at the age of 14. The college was for men only, he lived in residence, and the discipline was strict. In vacations at the Masson home he was reserved and modest in society and did not make any attachments.

When he returned to the North West at the age of 20, he found the young women not too impressive; his ambition for politics was formed and he plunged immediately into the absorbing political activities which consumed his attention. There is no reliable evidence that he had ever made any serious attachment or even paid attention to any girl.

He did not attend weddings or dances.

At the period of his return to Keeseville, Father Barbare had been living with him his mother and his sister Evaline. Riel was now 34 years old, a handsome man with a strong regular face, personal distinction and magnetism, and engaging manners; and he had delight in conversation.

Evaline was not long out of convent and was sentimental, warm, hospitable and enthusiastic. She did not have the rash, daring, adventurous nature of Grandmere de Lagimaudiere nor the directing managing efficiency of Louis' mother Julie; but she had rare common-sense and better judgment in practical affairs than either her brother or Louis.

Evaline mothered and fussed over invalidish Louis at the outset, and roused him out of his introversion with her merry kindness and jests. His history captured her romantic admiration, and all her sympathy was soon engaged. The intercourse ripened into a delicate love-affair, expressed during temporary separations in rarely beautiful letters which Louis preserved to his death, and which were found among his effects.

In October, 1878 he set out for New York to find a way to live which he could share with this winsome girl reared in a comfortable home in pleasant society. His history was a barrier to most openings which would have been suitable and for which his education fitted him, and his luck was ill.

Father Barbare and an interested associate advised him to study law, but he had neither the money nor the health for the confined course. Evaline urged that he return to the North West and begin a new life with his uncle who had a farm at St. Joseph—she would go to the North West when he had found his feet there. He left Keeseville in mid-November, 1878 and arrived in Pembina about two weeks later. Soon he wrote her that he would not return to the east.

In subsequent months what he observed of current conditions of his people recommitted him to their assistance, and in that way of life there was simply no place for delicate Evaline. He broke off their correspondence abruptly in 1879 and left to join a nomadic band of Metis in the wilds of Montana.

There is no evidence that he ever wrote to her again. She wrote one letter to him which he received in Montana but did not answer.

Chapter Fifteen

The Metis Scatter

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RIEL'S five-year banishment was to end early in 1880. In Keeseville in 1878 he had imagined the possibility of returning to Manitoba in two or three years and there establishing without too much difficulty a suitable home for Evaline Barbare whose intelligence and enthusiasm would support him in a new career which might be in some sense a continuation of the old.

When he left Manitoba for Ottawa, Red River had contained a population of probably about 15,000, of whom 12,000 were native to the area, and a majority of these were Metis people. In the new Manitoba legislature Metis members were numerically dominant.

Now the population had increased to about 65,000. Only six of the 24 legislature members were French-speaking and not all the six were Metis. All but about 500 of the Metis had fled the country for the vacant Saskatchewan area and the wilds of Montana. With increasing settlement on both sides of the border the buffalo, upon which the Metis subsisted had been wastefully slaughtered or had changed their pastures to prairies farther west, and other fur-bearing animals had been driven north or west.

Railways, steamboats, and stage coaches introduced by the immigrants destroyed the freighting business upon which most Metis had relied for part of their incomes. Although their members had been predominant in the first legislature they had lacked an intelligent idealistic leader devoted to social service, and had failed to use their power to establish quickly the schools and other forms of training which Louis had agitated for and would have devised for the elevation of the young Metis in skills and education to hold their own with the immigrant competition.

Old Jean Louis, Riel's father, had taught him that at least one full

generation of protection and patient instructional development under leaders of their own whom they could trust and who would understand them would be necessary; but that given this the Metis would weather through and show themselves equal to any other race or group.

A number of clever boys contemporary with Louis had had educational advantages similar to his, and had been his colleagues. But they had not had his sacrificial devotion to the interests of the group and failed to seize full advantages for the Metis people as a whole. It was mainly such Metis who had survived in Red River and whose families remained there. The rank and file of the Metis mass had gone under and fled.

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WHAT sickened Louis with the deepest dejection was the complete waste of the land grants of almost one and a half million acres to be distributed among the children of families with halfbreed heads. Only a few well educated Metis knew the value of land. The mass of them had never experienced anything but boundless prairie upon which communities of men were but specks. When nature provided bountifully the furs, hides, meats, sinews, bones, fish for simple processing into the ample furnishing of an adventurous and healthy life, why farm? Such simple tillage as they did was subsidiary to other means of living.

There had been a prolonged delay in implementing the grant, and when steps eventually were taken no intelligent attention was given to forms of distribution suited to Metis customs. Instead claims to land were issued in the form of "scrip"—paper title to 240 acres of land to be chosen from square plots according to the new block system of "sec-

tions," "half sections" and "quarter sections."

Few Metis young men could live happily or successfully on such isolated farms nor had they the capital to provide themselves with tools and seed, nor an understanding of the varieties of tillage and husbandry for profitable commercial farming. Moreover the scrip was made negotiable, and the readiness of smart speculators to pay cash for such pieces of paper—which they would later sell to immigrants wanting more acreage than they could acquire by homesteading, for twenty and sometimes even a hundred times their outlay—resulted in many headstrong or poverty ridden Metis selling their scrip immediately. Most Metis families, overwhelmed and cowed by the thousands of new settlers who openly despised and ridiculed them moved away to the empty lands farther west where they could pursue their familiar way of living. Thousands of young Metis parted with their scrip for \$40; a high price was \$60.

Knowing how he could have prevented all this if he had been permitted to lead his people in peace and security, Riel was further embittered. He also foresaw that in just a few years immigration and settlement would overtake his people in their new locations, they would move on again, and again, until the farthest frontier — and then what? He could see only the depression of his people to the level of the Indians—or worse, for the Indians were being given reservations, protective agents paid by government, seed grain and cattle and some fostering help. He was not permitted to help his people and he could make no sense of the reasons.

Most of the Metis stalwarts who had borne the brunt of their first effort to adapt themselves to new circumstances and authority were dead or scattered. Even to his own people in their new location Riel was a dim memory, in less than ten years, and among the newcomers in

Manitoba he found he had the incredible reputation of a half-breed savage, a murderer, who had deluded the Metis to rebel against the Queen in hatred of the British, and who should have been hanged. He had tried, they said, to obstruct progress.

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LIFE in Manitoba was out of the question. Life in the east meant a slow penurious, charity-assisted preparation for a doubtful profession and no assurance that he could make a life fit for Evaline Barbare to share. His choice was inevitable.

In the summer of 1879 he joined a nomadic band of Metis in the remotest wilds of Montana, where he was joined by increasing numbers; and he began to teach these people how to run their lives by democratic institutions — a rudimentary beginning with small affairs.

The inevitable obstacles produced before long a sort of theocracy different from his Red River intentions—for he was concerned with their purity of morals, which became predominant in the absence of settled possessions. But it had also some of the features of a communal establishment. They operated a store, and sold furs and hides co-operatively. His contacts with settled people were only through occasionally necessary petitions to authority for better regulations of such matters as concerned the Metis—for instance the putting down of the illicit whiskey trade whereby law breakers demoralized his nomads.

Riel visualized as now necessary at least two generations of such fostering and he entertained vague notions of a separate self-governing state eventually where all Metis and most Indians would organize themselves harmoniously with but one religion—unlike any he had seen, but acceptable to all. Out of touch with anyone of his own intellectual stature, and outside the circulation area of any printed matter his philosophizing sometimes appeared

erratic. He became introspective and the mysticism of his maternal forebears was now greatly exaggerated in him.

In the summer of 1882 he married a half-breed girl, Marguerita Bell-heumeur, whose father was a strayed French-Canadian pioneer, and mother a Cree. She had been brought up nomadically but she had vague ambitions and this was to alter Riel's life considerably. When the first baby arrived in 1883, young Madame Riel demanded better things for her child and Riel found a position as teacher in a school for

half-breed boys, which he enjoyed and at which he gave satisfaction—except when he injected political discussions.

He had become a naturalized American citizen, and apparently gave little attention to Canadian affairs from which he had cut himself off rather completely—for the first three years in Montana he had written to no one, not even his mother.

But the ambitions of his young wife were about to send him back into Canada.

Chapter Sixteen

The Call to Saskatchewan

IN the summer of 1883, Riel, at the prodding of his pretty, young wife for more money, went to Manitoba to try to sell some property there.

His exile had expired three years before, and his entry was quite legal. He timed his arrival so that he could attend the "long wedding" of his sister, Henriette, July 11-12. He had not visited nor spoken with his family for more than ten years and he stayed at the home of his mother who still actively managed her farm at St. Vital with Grand-mere de Lagimaudiere (Maria Ann Gaboury, the first white woman on the plains), an honored and by no means inactive guest despite her great age.

His cousin, Napoleon Nault, who had migrated with most of the Metis to the Saskatchewan River area, was also a guest at the wedding.

Over several days Nault gave Riel a description of the condition of the Metis. It was in many respects a repetition of Red River in 1869-70. But the Metis were much more helpless.

In the first place they were less numerous and more scattered. In the second place they lived in a North West Territory which was securely owned by Canada without confusion of authority between a great Company, a Canada which had not yet acquired rights to govern, and a native population established in one settlement for two generations or more.

Instead of a McDougall attempting to enter the country without constitutional rights, to set up a despotic government, they were under the rule of a counterpart of McDougall—a Lieutenant-Governor and advisory council, all appointed by the Ottawa government and responsible only to the Minister of the Interior—but the Metis had no vote either for members of the

Council or for a representative in the Canadian Parliament.

Moreover the Canadian government had established the Royal North West Mounted Police force and controlled it. Its duty was to enforce such laws as were passed at Ottawa and such Orders in Council as were issued by the Lieutenant Governor of the North West Territory. They were in fact under exactly the kind of government Manitoba would have had but for Louis Riel's resistance.

The result was that the Metis seldom received answers to their petitions or obtained redress of their grievances—the usual situation under despotic government all over the world.

At first life had been not too bad for the Metis. They were remote from groups who hated them for the merely abstract reasons of language, religion, and mixed Indian blood, and the R.N.W.M.P. were not cruel or brutal in administering the despotic laws. They observed equality of rights as between one man and another, notwithstanding that, unlike any other police in Canada, they were authorized to perform the divergent functions of investigators, arresters, prosecutor and judge and court reporter, the latter three functions of one official in each detachment who commanded the others.

There were sufficient buffalo, although not so many as in Red River before the Canadians came to Red River, and before concentrated settlement in the border states. The buffalo had changed their habits with changing conditions, and deserted their dangerous eastern pastures and paths for the empty lands farther west. At the outset there were ample buffalo to sustain both Metis and Indians and their natural increase for a long time to come.

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BUT around about 1877 something mysterious happened to the buffalo, and all of a sudden there were no more. They went south in the usual numbers in the autumn, came back mysteriously depleted in the spring, and in the following spring in a few mere straggling families, not herds.

So the Metis had to turn all at once to farming—there was no other way to survive. The Indians starved, and the Metis almost did for several years. But the Canadian government made treaties with the Indian tribes whereby the tribes gave up their natural rights to the widespread lands in return for reservations of land and assistance in the form of food, seed grain, implements, schools, churches, the fostering direction of agents paid by the Canadian government, and certain small annual grants of money for personal spending. No such treaties were offered the Metis nor did the Metis ask them.

The Metis had to shift for themselves. They did not complain about that. They turned to tillage and sought suitable farm lands. But the country was being surveyed according to the block system of square sections, quarters and halves—square farms laid out regardless of access to river transport, or the desires of people like the Metis to live in close groups for neighborliness, co-operation in work, and convenience to school and church.

As they settled upon land and started to improve it and applied for titles, their applications were ignored or they were told they could not stay on their locations. So, in the still empty country, they were carrying on without titles. Just ahead they could see that with the completion of the C.P.R., settlers would rush in, and without the security of legal titles their improved land could be seized from them without compensation, and they would have to migrate again and start all over, and then in just a few years be pushed out again.

In years of bad crops when they

had not seed grain for the next spring, their petitions for help to find and bring in seed grain were ignored. The Indians were granted cattle and equipment, yet when the Metis asked for similar help they were ignored or refused.

It did not seem to be a matter of which party was in power in Ottawa. It had been bad under the Liberal Mackenzie government but worse under the next Conservative Macdonald government, and worst of all when Macdonald himself was Minister of the Interior.

Colonel Dennis, deputy minister of that department, who had learned much from his experience of the Red River survey and subsequent troubles, had tried to induce more intelligent planning but had been unable to get attention. Others had tried—even Charles Mair, writer of the mischievous early Red River letters to the Toronto Globe, now living in Prince Albert, who had spoken and written on behalf of the Metis but without effect. The Metis themselves had asked that they be granted blocks of land suitable for their way of living, but this was refused without explanation.

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IN the previous year, the Metis around Prince Albert had so petitioned. Finding the surveyed land occupied, they had been obliged to occupy unsurveyed land, which they had proceeded to improve. They were astonished and perplexed to be told, when they petitioned for titles, that when the lands would be surveyed they would have to pay \$2 per acre for any farm that fell on odd numbered sections of the future survey. As they had acted in good faith they asked that the lands they occupied be treated as even-numbered sections in the future or that they be given substitute grants. They were told curtly that "when the proper time comes, the case of each bona fide settler will be dealt with on its merits, but as regards surveying of lands, all lands will be surveyed according to the survey now in force."

Certain Metis were appointed by the Canadian Government from time to time to the advisory council but those chosen were not men approved by the Metis and they usually went over to the government side. In fact it was becoming the practice of the government to alienate any Metis individual who showed ability to draft petitions and present them effectively by offering him such a tempting well-paid job in the government service that he could not resist taking it.

It was useless for the Metis to attempt organization for united action. Gabriel Dumont, a man widely known all over the plains for his ability and integrity, had attempted to establish a sort of "republic" of which he was president so that he could carry on peaceful negotiations for orderly redress of grievances and promote some over-all solution of their more pressing problems. But the Royal North West Mounted Police had broken up the organization and warned them against any other such attempt.

What they needed, if they were not to be harried to the North Pole, or pushed into the Arctic Sea, Nault told Riel, was a leader of experience and integrity whom they could trust not to desert them. The only such person was obviously Louis Riel.

Their discussion lasted many days. Riel explained that he could not go back with Nault for further discussion with others who wanted to see him, as he had a contract to teach for the following year and he needed the pay, little as it was, for the support of his family.

But as Nault went on describing indignities which the Metis were suffering helplessly, and an outlook which threatened their future destruction, Riel was deeply moved. Also the meeting with his family and with former friends, some of them now men of importance in Manitoba, stirred in him a discovery that his remote way of life, lack of contact with men of his own stature, lack of newspapers and books, had been numbing him and stunting him intellectually, and he had a revival of his peculiar sense of mission—of the Metis as his vocation.

He finally told Nault that he would consider going to them in the next summer vacation; but only if the Metis would hold a very large public meeting, debate the matter openly and then by a very large majority pass a resolution to invite him and send delegates to him in Montana with a written invitation and copy of the resolution and record of the vote. If that were done he would consider it favorably.

Chapter Seventeen

Slaughter of the Buffalo

NHAULT had told Riel of the mysterious disappearance of the buffalo, suddenly about 1877. Gabriel Dumont later told Riel in some detail of the scale of the destruction as it affected the Canadian hunting grounds.

Fort Macleod in 1877 was offered 30,000 hides for export; in 1878 it was offered but 5,647. In 1879 none.

Fort Walsh in 1877 was offered 18,253 hides; in 1878 only 8,617; in 1879, none.

The 1877 kills, illustrated by these figures, represented the normal annual rate of killing for a considerable period of years before. The sudden drop in one year, and the total disappearance of buffalo in herds the next year was a tragedy for the inhabitants of the North West. It dislocated their economy fundamentally.

The Metis and the Indians alike had depended upon the buffalo for their meat for each year; they tanned the hides for clothing and moccasins, harness, and household furnishing; they used all parts of the animal for something—even had some uses for horns. They sold their surplus hides for export. The Indians used the tanned hides for teepees. The bare prairies afforded no ready substitutes for these essential products.

Vegetables were not native to the country and did not become a dietary item until well on in the 20th century. The only fruits were wild berries—which Metis and Indians mixed with buffalo meat and buffalo fat for pemmican. Cereals, even when grown with skill and good seeds, were an uncertain crop, varying greatly from year to year. The Metis knew little of animal husbandry—but they did know the buffalo and all buffalo processing skills.

The herds had gone south in normal numbers after the autumn hunts in 1876. About one-tenth

that number returned in the spring. Next spring only straggling families came back. Idaho and Montana were still wild, relatively empty country, and hunting there had not been depleting more than the herds could stand.

While Riel was at Montreal College, his father, Jean Louis, had written him from Red River, of rumors going about across the border, that influence was being brought to bear upon the United States government for a mass slaughter of the great beasts, 'at one swoop, on the argument that the buffalo were a menace to progress—they hampered homesteading, were a nuisance to the railways, had not an economic value in relation to their pasturage and general support, and with thick settlement were no longer a necessity to the general economy.

That plan had been to organize a great massed hunt of extraordinary proportions in mid-winter when the vast herds had passed to southern pastures in and below the border states.

But the rumor had proven false; the United States government had not been persuaded. And without government approval, hunts on the scale needed for obliteration could not be organized. Much wasteful killing had gone on. But the buffalo were both prolific and wary. Gradually they altered their paths to avoid the worst damage and the decrease was not fast enough to alarm such hunters as the Metis, who were watchful of their own interests. The Metis hunts were large, co-operative, well disciplined enterprises of many hundreds of men working together, organized according to their skills into scouts, killers, skinners, processors, etc., and sharing the product in an orderly way. Such hunts were well led, well disciplined, and maintained a severe code of ethics established by tradition.

The Indians, with their inferior weapons and often inadequate supply of horses, and also with their fierce inter-tribal wars and enmities, had often been wasteful and wanton. One wasteful practice was to "impound" the buffalo by stampeding them over cliffs (Jumping Pound near Calgary is said to have been a site for this practice). But the Metis, with plenty of horses, and the best weapons of their day, could and did practice a sufficient amount of intelligent conservation to prevent serious decline.

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RIEL interpreted the long history as his father had understood it from observation of happenings across the border into which he constantly freighted, and described the final event as he had known it from his vantage point in Montana.

The great North American buffalo herd had roamed the plains country before settlement in orderly migrations from south to north in the autumn and the reverse in the spring for summer and winter pastures, and had dispersed themselves according to the wealths of pasture.

But with railway construction and rapid settlement of the border states, which broke the pasture into plowed lands, there had been an impediment to migration such that a southern herd and a northern herd had resulted, with the settled belt like a wall between them. The southern herd weakened with overgrazed pasture but it had also been destroyed under a calculated policy of pursuit, organized on a commercially efficient basis, not discouraged by the government.

Expert hunters, slayers, and skinners had been called up in great numbers into commercial outfits, and hired to kill in the greatest numbers possible. Only the hides were marketed, all but a small portion of the meat was destroyed or left to rot and carrion. This increased production of hides extended the markets for skins, so that buffalo robes and coats became articles of common use in the eastern states, and this use in turn increased the

demand for a decade, so that hunting on this scale and in this manner became more profitable to the experts than independent co-operative hunting. The great southern herds thus passed in a few years.

The northern herds always migrated from their winter habitation in the western United States, to the Canadian plains where they spent the summer. For that reason they were less exposed to American slaughter, and had a safe area always. To reach safer winter pastures became impossible for them.

But when Sitting Bull, the last Indian to champion the Indians against the American government, crossed the boundary to escape the American army, he organized his forces on Canadian soil and continued to menace the enemy from that base. Officers of the American army conceived the strategy of starving the enemy by destroying his food supply, which was the buffalo which spent half its year in Canada.

This was accomplished by stretching troops in a thin screen across the northern boundary of the United States, through Montana to the Rocky Mountains and blocking the spring migration into Canada. Under army auspices, expert hunters from all over the northern states were quietly assembled into the most enormous organization of the kind ever assembled together and put to the kill for the purpose of complete destruction. No publicity was put about, and there were few observers.

During the period of expanded markets for hides, it was true that some wasteful slaughter was done by Canadian hunters and that the Metis were not uniformly given to conservation. But these wastes were sporadic and only temporarily depletive. The sudden complete destruction which happened could not have been achieved by hunters operating on their own, and no such hunters would have had the incentive.

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RIEL was visited in Montana, in mid June, 1884, by Gabriel Dumont and three other persons: Michael Dumais and Moise Ouelette,

representing the French-speaking breeds of Saskatchewan River area; and J. S. Isbester, representing the English-speaking breeds. They brought a formal invitation to him to go to their country, a warm letter from one of their parish priests, Father Andre, supporting their resolution and many documents presenting in detail their resolutions passed in open meetings, describing the grievances they wanted redressed.

Their invitation concluded: "We, the French and English natives of the North West, knowing that Louis Riel made a bargain with the Government of Canada in 1870, which bargain is contained mostly in the Manitoba Act, and this meeting not knowing the contents of the Manitoba Act, we have thought it advisable that a delegation be sent to the said Louis Riel, and have his assistance to bring all matters referred to in the above resolutions in proper shape and form before the Government of Canada, so that our just demands be granted."

Riel had received many letters from individuals all assuring him that the people were practically unanimous behind the delegation and from English letter writers asserting that their group now greatly regretted not having been on his side from the outset in Red River.

Even the Indians would support him, one wrote, "although we know you do not like them much." "Do not imagine that you will begin the work when you come. It is already done and things are decided"—a statement which was to have more significance than Riel quite realized at the time.

It was explained that Dumais was a substitute for Louis Schmidt, a well educated Metis, who had been a close and important colleague of Riel's in 1869-70, but who just lately had accepted a lucrative position from the Canadian Government—another example of the favorite practice of the ministry to deprive the breeds of leaders as fast as they appeared.

Mr. Charles Nolin was described as one of the warmest champions,

who had been very active in getting this action taken.

The delegation remained several days in close discussion. They later said that the very humble home of Riel reminded them of the opportunities he had had to become rich, if he would desert them, and that he had stood sincere under all risks. Riel finally gave them his favorable answer in written terms. The invitation was the first friendly notice he had received from anybody in ten years, and he was touched and elated.

He spoke of his being an American citizen now, and therefore any advice given by him from Montana could carry little weight, so he would return to Canada. He also informed them of personal considerations which might be said to influence him. "To be frank is shortest," he said, and went on to tell them that the Canadian Government owed him 250 acres of land and five valuable lots under Clause 31 of the Manitoba Act, and also "something else"—recompense for services rendered in Red River but not acknowledged, which he might press for when the time came and the amount of which he would discuss with them all later on.

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HE soon set out with his wife and young children (his wife sulky about his decision) and they arrived safely July 1, at St. Laurent, a small village on the north shore of the Saskatchewan River near Prince Albert. Lawrence Clarke, an official of the Hudson's Bay Company, and a member of the Council of the North West Territory, reported his arrival to the Canadian Government and recommended his arrest; but no notice was taken.

Riel had a clear plan in his mind that he would proceed along much the same lines as in Red River, issue a Bill of Rights, and make peaceful agitation for its support, with a show of organized but disciplined force behind it to overawe attempts to prevent it. But this was a different situation and he was shortly to find control difficult.

In Red River he had himself

started agitation and called the people and from them selected his colleagues carefully. In Ambrose Lepine he had chosen a man of some education and pacific temper, with singular gifts to impose discipline, to have charge of the military side of the program. And in the pacifism of the mass of the people he had a deterrent to violence by his more impatient followers.

The group of young Metis who were his closest colleagues had been educated Metis more interested in designing a good Bill of Rights than in quick action by armed force, and they had chosen intelligent helpers in the parishes to propagandize among the illiterate.

Great numbers of Red River Metis had been established in the settlement for two generations and more, and in close settlement had lost sense of direct affiliation with the Indians to whom they were related only through forebears in the early nomadic stages of their family history. They thought of themselves as a new entity of mixed blood, and regarded Indians with a fostering kinship, as their poor relations in the wilds. Riel had also had considerable, if ambiguous, help from his church.

In Saskatchewan the population and its effective leaders were largely illiterate, they had recently been re-infused with Indian blood and now lived in close association with Indians. They all had a clear sense of what they wanted, already equated any new Bill of Rights with the general principles of the Manitoba Act, and were already united with English breeds in a loose but clear association, and they had invited Riel to help them rather than respond to his invitation for them to support him.

Finally in Gabriel Dumont, Riel had not an Ambrose Lepine of pacifist leanings, but a strong character endowed with latent military genius of a quality which was to fascinate General Middleton, and already an experienced and accepted leader of the people.

DUMONT was a half-breed and illiterate, and entertained no sense of inferiority on either score. He was successful in every skill of the country. He operated a store and did much diversified business. He was a powerful, ruggedly built man some years older than Riel, who was just turning his fortieth year, and had an alert intelligence. His high standard of honor had won him renown throughout the territory and his generosity and charity had attached to him in personal devotion hundreds of families. He was completely fearless — a condition based upon his integrity, resourcefulness, proven sound judgment, cool common sense, sustained courage, and general success in all his adventures. "One might travel the plains from one end to the other . . . and never hear an unkind word of Dumont," wrote Colonel Sam Steele, celebrated Mounted Police pioneer, in his *Reminiscences*. "When in trouble the cry was always for 'Gabriel'."

He had left Red River just after Louis' return from Montreal College and before the "trouble"; but he had so well understood all that Louis did later, that he himself had organized a government of which he was president for united action in presenting petitions and for promoting general welfare in an orderly way. Today we would call it "local self-government," although he had called it a "republic." The Mounted Police had suppressed it and forbidden anything like it.

He had endured and survived the famine after the sudden destruction of the buffalo, succored weaker families and helped all to find new ways of getting along.

Now, Gabriel was tired of the government's neglect, and bent on getting action. He was willing to co-operate with Louis with all patience in whatever Louis could contrive for getting redress of grievances without bloodshed; but he was not willing to spend all the rest of his life in futile agitation, nor to accept defeat without battle — battle with bloodshed. The breed

population in majority numbers was of this feeling. The phrase in the invitation had been precise: "We . . . have thought it advisable to have his (Riel's) assistance to bring all matters in proper form before the government. . . ."

He was a devout Roman Catholic with profound respect for the church. He understood and respected the forms and functions of the Police, but he was not awed by either

priests or police officers. And he had a clear idea of his rights.

Naturally he was in potential control of the means for making a show of force with which they could resist if they had to. He would also control the decisions as to the time to use such force. Nobody said it; but everybody knew it. This time Louis shared authority already in existence; that authority had brought him into the scene—he had not created it.

Chapter Eighteen

Church Opposition

RIEL began his peaceful agitation with a series of public meetings among the breeds in various villages, whom he addressed in terms of notable moderation. His suggestions that the crux of reforms necessary would be to get elected and responsible representation in the North West Council and in the Canadian Parliament appealed to many whites who were suffering just then from two seasons of early frosts and from the collapse of an early real estate boom. They invited him to address them, going to the trouble of getting up petitions when Riel insisted upon that.

At Prince Albert one such petition was signed by the entire adult male population except Lawrence Clarke, Tom MacKay, Charles Mair, and Dr. Sproatt. Riel delighted them by taking the British coat of arms and motto as his theme and giving a lucid discourse on Canadian history leading up to his main contentions.

What may also have increased the interest of white settlers was the news that Roman Catholic clergy were exerting strong opposition to the presence of Riel in the country. This puzzled Riel. Father Andre, a much-loved priest, had supported the Dumont delegation's invitation with a warm letter and Riel's relations with the parish priests at the outset were generally good.

But the church had many reasons for its hostility. Riel had openly announced personal views which were heterodox. The personal breach between Archbishop Tache and himself in Red River had never healed, and Riel continued to doubt Tache's honesty. The Archbishop entertained ideas for some plan of a grant of land set apart for the Metis, to be under church control until they learned better how to take care of their property than they had known how to do with the scrip.

But beyond all such details, im-

portant enough in themselves, was the perception by the hierarchy of the intense factionalism still smouldering within whatever ministry held power at Ottawa and waiting for an "incident" such as Riel could produce, instantly to explode.

Wariness about this in the ministry itself had been at the bottom of most of the neglect of Metis grievances. Revival of the Metis question could wreck any government at Ottawa. Archbishop Tache in particular and the church in general were still sensitive about the Ontario clamor against them for Tache's activity in Red River matters. He had discovered how he could be bamboozled by politicians, and he was determined that the church should be above suspicion of collusion with Riel, who had become a dangerous symbol in central Canada.

Riel met his opposition bluntly. Told that Bishop Grandin of Saskatchewan had asserted that the higher clergy did not know what Riel's program of reform was, Riel challenged a meeting to explain it. The Bishop granted an interview and Riel read to him his manifesto clause by clause. The manifesto was formulated as a preliminary to a full Bill of Rights, to be a basis for Metis discussion. There was patient discussion and criticism of details by Bishop Grandin. But there was no reconciliation. Dis-sension continued and increased. The more timorous breeds were temporarily detached from Riel but the leaders and bulk of their adherents merely drew more closely together and became defiant.

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WITHIN a few months the discord with the church was to become shattering.

The parish priests were divided in their ability to understand the wider issue animating the higher clerics. Father Andre, for instance, most beloved throughout the area,

was a Corsican, not a French-Canadian, and had a very muddled insight. However each and all of them could understand heterodoxy. So Riel's heterodoxy was emphasized by the higher clergy. Outside the church it was grossly misrepresented by other foes, and distorted for instance, in some publications, as a clear indication of Riel's savagery.

He was presented as a pagan given to bloody, foul ceremonial with disgusting blood sacrifices. This scandal arose from the simple circumstances that Riel suffered acutely from a long standing stomach trouble and he had resorted to a concoction of boiled bullock's blood as a medication—it did him no good, but he persisted (as many people do with patent medicines). Rumor seized upon the fact and inflamed imaginations of his enemies did the rest.

The clearest record of Riel's personal creed—which he had taught to his following of nomads in Montana but did not force upon his followers in Saskatchewan—was gathered by Rev. C. B. Pitblado later, during the journey of Riel from General Middleton's headquarters to the barracks in Regina where Riel was to be a prisoner after his voluntary surrender. Mr. Pitblado was a scholarly Presbyterian minister who had been chaplain of one of Middleton's battalions and was one of Riel's guards en route to the prison. Riel delighted in conversation and talked constantly and freely to his guards throughout the journey of a week. Mr. Pitblado being curious about Riel's creed, inquired of him and made a careful record of his explanations of it. His formulation, carefully composed for general public understanding, is the best available for that purpose. It was:

1—We believe that all true followers constitute the church. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are Christians, and all Christians make the church holy, Catholic and vital.

2—We do not believe in the infallibility of the Pope.

3—We believe in the inspiration

of the Holy Scriptures and the right of every man to read and learn the truths they contain.

4—We believe in a regularly ordained ministry. We accept ministers of all denominations, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, in our ministry without re-ordaining. Would be somewhat doubtful about Baptists who are not always consistent with each other. But we accept the Methodists. We regard as valid the administration of ordinances by these ministers.

5—We believe in a form of church government but prefer the Episcopate. Would like to see a head bishop for the Dominion and the New World, independent of Rome. Do not think the affairs of the church can be well administered so far away. In fact Rome has ceased to be an Apostolic see.

6—We believe in one God. We believe in the Trinity, though not in the ordinary sense. They are not equal and they are not three in one. There is the Father Who is Jehovah, the One Who is. There is the Son Who became man. God took on Him man's nature. He is God incarnate. He is the Saviour Who redeems us. There is the Holy Ghost Who is the only spirit dwelling in every good man. This is the spirit of holiness.

7—We pray to God, to Christ, to Mary and the Saints. The Three Persons in the Trinity are in these three first. God the Father is perfect and highest. God the Son is perfect and Saviour. Mary is pure but not perfect, and in her dwells the Holy Ghost. The Saints are our friends who have access to the persons most powerful. These friends can intercede in our behalf in the courts of Heaven just as friends might intercede for us at courts upon earth. We believe in praying for ourselves and others.

8—We believe in the final salvation of all men. God's mercy will reach farther than man's sins. He will not allow things to go so far that restoration is impossible.

As they parted at Regina, Riel gave Mr. Pitblado a Greek testament

upon the flyleaf of which he wrote the following:

"May 20th, 1885. I have a passion. I love truth, justice, righteousness, above all other things. I pray to God that my knowledge of truth, of justice, of righteousness be certain and without error. The consciousness of reading the scripture is full of life and consolation. The word of Christ purifies our souls. Let us live and die in perfect harmony with the Redeemer and we will be saved. A preacher who preaches humbly for the benefit of Paradise is a precious existence before God. I am an unprofitable servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Louis "David" Riel."

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RIEL was at first unobstructed by the Canadian Government. Other tactics were brought into operation.

Efforts to detach him from his cause were made in various ways. The Lieutenant-Governor was party to an unofficial offer to give Riel the place of the Metis member of the Council of the North West territory, Raoul Breland. Riel asked whether the Lieutenant-Governor and those with him were not satisfied with Breland, and when they admitted that they were, he asked sarcastically why then Breland should be put out of his appointment in order to give the place to himself.

Persons active in party management suggested that they could get him appointed to the Canadian Senate. There was no Senate vacancy at the time and Riel suggested that they could not get any such appointment for him and that they knew it very well.

As he continued his peaceful agitation with public meetings in many villages he spoke quite openly of his claim for compensation from the Canadian Government for services rendered in the later stages of the Red River trouble but not acknowledged by the Government. It indicated his solidarity with the breeds and illustrated how he personally shared their unredressed grievances.

He had referred to it in his letter of acceptance, discussed it with the Metis council, discussed it with Father Andre immediately upon his arrival in the settlement, and with a firm of Prince Albert lawyers who said they represented the Government.

As the opposition of the church continued and increased, the position of Father Andre who had backed the Dumont delegation to Riel in Montana with a warm and insistent letter, became embarrassing. He asked Riel to go to see him and opened the matter of Riel's claim, asking if he had ever been paid. Riel said his only reward had been five years in exile, and a reward of \$5,000 for his head. Andre said he believed in the justice of the claim and asked whether Riel would approve Andre's trying to get it for him. Riel doubted that Andre could achieve anything but was willing he should try.

Riel immediately summoned the Metis Council and laid this matter before them. He had said from the onset that "when the time came" he would consult with them about action and about the amount to be asked as proper compensation. Suggestions of the councillors ran all the way from \$100,000 to a million; but Riel cut it short with an assertion that \$35,000 would be fair. The amount, he told them, would be enough for him to buy a printing plant and issue a newspaper on their behalf, through which he could give the public detailed information of their grievances and failures to get redress and so enlist intelligent public sympathy.

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HE had always wanted a newspaper at Red River to rebut the Nor' Wester, but had not succeeded. Then he had obtained control of the Nor' Wester plant and had used its presses to issue a gazette for the Provisional Government.

In Saskatchewan possession of a newspaper plant would enable him to carry on peaceful agitation on a scale to impress the people who had invited him, and give him prestige

which would increase his authority against violent action.

In the next few days Riel made inquiry where a suitable plant could be bought and on December 23 reported to Father Andre the amount decided and the purpose for which he would use it.

Father Andre had not had in mind, in making his approach to Riel, any such use by Riel of any such recompense money. "But the question will remain the same," he objected. Riel replied, "Father is it true the Government owes me that money? You said so, yourself. As to the Metis question, it will be the same because the money will give us a force which will greatly strengthen the situation." Riel reported to the Council the details of this interview.

Father Andre did not pursue his proposal immediately. On January 21 he wrote a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor which read in part: "The granting of some indemnity to which he really has a right will conciliate all the French half-breeds. If not they will be disaffected. I strongly advise you not to look to some paltry dollars when the peace of the country is at stake. The half-breeds sympathize with Riel, and feel sorely in seeing how poor and wretched their leader is, who was obliged to run away and hide himself in a foreign country because the Government had not kept faith with him according to their pledged promise." (This referred to the flight when Colonel Wolseley had planned to capture the reception committee waiting at Fort Garry to receive him, ready to resign their authority to the Lieutenant-Governor.)

Of course, nothing came of it.

But although Riel had only the power of his voice his agitation won over many whites to a respect for his aims and arguments. The public meetings were not always peaceful, but sentiment in Riel's favor crystallized so rapidly that the audiences themselves dealt with attempts at trouble-making.

With many meetings all over the

countryside and with protracted discussions among the Metis about the details of the manifesto issued earlier in the fall by Riel, time ran over into the new year. In January Riel summarized the Metis discussions and conclusions into a full Bill of Rights, turned it over to the Metis Council and announced that he would now return to Montana as he had done all he could for them.

This announcement filled the breeds with dismay. They clamored for him to remain and carry on with them to the end. After some thoughtful consideration he consented but realized that it was a crucial decision in which he staked everything and assumed full responsibility for all that would follow, whatever it might be. He would no longer be merely their adviser but their leader with all the risks implied. It would be a situation in which he would have more authority, but also one in which he must try to retain control in association with others who did not share his view that the best plan of operations was quick-witted manoeuvring in agitation rather than use of violence, and in which he must prevent any split with those others and must act with them when he could not prevail over them by argument and persuasion.

Arrangements were made for the support of his family by the Metis, taking up collections for a fund and by Moise Ouelette's lending him a house rent-free. The people gave him a complimentary banquet at which he proposed a toast to the Queen.

Realizing that the church opposition was becoming more and more powerful and was intimidating not a few, he met it by boldly proclaiming the sanctity of his mission and announcing himself as the Prophet of the People. In the process he magnified his own faith in his mission, convincing himself that it had Divine blessing.

Riel's second Bill of Rights, designed for Saskatchewan conditions, provided for representative respon-

sible government; that old settlers have the same rights as in Manitoba by the Manitoba Act; that titles to occupied lands be confirmed; that Government work and contracts be given to the people of the area instead of to the Hudson's Bay Company and outsiders; that half-breed children receive grants of 240 acres of land each at maturity; that a grant of two million acres be set aside for the support of Protestant and Roman Catholic churches and

schools; that 100 townships of swamp land be set aside for distribution every 18 years for 120 years to each new generation; that the present inhabitants be paid an amount equal to fair interest on the present worth of the whole territory; division of the Territory into Provinces; assistance when needful of grain and implements; grants to certain orders of nuns; better support for the Indians.

Chapter Nineteen

The Attack is Planned

RIEL'S decision in January 1885, to remain with the Metis, and his justification of himself by comparison of himself with Old Testament prophets was interpreted by the church as a challenge to their spiritual leadership. The parish priests of the district held a meeting and decided to deny him all the rites and consolations of the church, with the implication of similar punishment for all who continued in association with him. At this the Metis leaders became stubborn and Riel himself met the threat with an increase of defiance.

At that stage the Canadian government conceived the strategy of having its local officials circulate the news that the Bill of Rights would be ignored because it had been prepared by a person who was not a British subject (Riel had become a naturalized U.S. citizen in Montana) and no redresses given while such a person remained in association with them.

A telegram purporting to come from Prime Minister Macdonald made an indefinite promise that a commission of some kind would be appointed to investigate their affairs, but not until this situation was altered. They set going a rumor that the police were being instructed to arrest and deport Riel. The Metis Council remained obstinate — they had assimilated the history of Red River.

Riel was suffering acutely from his stomach complaint, excited by the dangerous rumors, and somewhat worried by scattered withdrawals of support from rank and file breeds made timid by the action of the priests. In February he was enraged by a mild domestic scandal. A Mounted Police sergeant paid a visit to his wife in his absence, and remained at her house most of the day. Madame Dumont had been the only other person with Madame Riel. This started malicious gossip

and when Riel heard of it, the women would give him no satisfactory explanation. When the incident was magnified into proportions of a scandal—Riel's Montana half-breed wife was young and pretty—he was quite beside himself.

On March 1, he decided to demonstrate to his enemies the amount of armed strength he could take command of, by a peaceful muster of his loyal followers. This meeting with approval of the leading Metis, he told Father Andre of his further plan to set up a Provisional Government through which to administer this and all that would ensue. He and Father Andre had a stormy quarrel. Next day he sounded out English-speaking people at a public meeting at Halcro by bringing up the rumors of the police plans to arrest and deport him and the response was loyal. Dumont was pleased and started active measures to assemble loyal followers for a mass demonstration.

One of the first persons Dumont approached was Nolin, Riel's cousin, with whom Riel had lodged in the summer after his arrival. Nolin had been involved in the Red River affair, but had deserted Riel in a crisis, and fled the settlement. But he had been a prime mover in bringing Riel to Saskatchewan and one of the more extreme members of the Metis Council through which the agitation had been arranged to date. He had talked a lot about taking up arms, but now that he was confronted with a definite proposition, he countered with a proposal that instead of a show of force they resort to nine days of public prayer until St. Joseph's day (their patron saint), a suggestion which was adopted by a voice vote of 7 to 1.

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RIEL not only made no effort to conceal his plan, but took pains to spread the news to the Mounted

Police. Major Crozier, in charge at Fort Carleton, near Batoche, telegraphed the government at Ottawa, March 11, of the excitement prevailing and on March 14 asked for reinforcements of 100 men to be hurried from Regina (two hundred miles south with no rail line).

March 17, Riel called a public meeting to discuss steps to meet this threat from the police. He referred to his Metis followers as his police. St. Joseph's day would be March 19; it was always celebrated by a mass gathering of the people, the ceremonies concluding with gun salutes. March 18 mounted men were converging on St. Laurent by all trails, ready for either the celebration or whatever might ensue.

Late in the afternoon a band arriving from Batoche excitedly reported an alarming interview with a member of the Council of the North West Territory just returned from Ottawa, by whom they had been told that the Canadian government, instead of considering the business he had to put before them, had given orders for despatching a large body of Mounted Police from the south into the area. (The reinforcements Crozier had asked for).

Riel, Dumont and others raided two stores in Batoche that night and seized all the arms and ammunition in their stocks. Riel told one of the store-keepers "It has commenced." They next arrested certain local government officials, cut the telegraph line from Batoche to Prince Albert—but left the line to the east open so that news might go east freely—commandeered the Church and took it over for proceedings of organizing a Provisional Government. Dumont arrested a half-breed supposed to have informed the police.

Instead of the usual St. Joseph's day ceremonies at the church at Batoche next day, the building was put to political uses, over the anguished protests of Father Moulin. The congregation—including all the riders who had come in the day before and that morning—

elected officers by popular vote for the new organization. Riel presided at the meeting and conducted elections but refused any nomination because he was a citizen of the United States.

He gave the organization the name Ex Ovede, Latin for "from the flock." Records kept of the proceedings nowhere contain his name as directing or advising any of the actions taken or resolutions adopted.

The first business of the newly-elected officers was to seize three persons suspected of intentions to inform, and to put them on trial. Two were released but Nolin, who was one of the three, was sentenced to be shot. He was detained in custody but no arrangements were made for carrying out the order.

The Ex Ovede prepared a plan of strategy, which was to call up as many Indians as were willing, make an attack upon the Police at Fort Carleton before the reinforcements could arrive, capture Fort Carleton, Battleford and Prince Albert and entrench themselves to oppose the Canadian army if it came. The capture of the Fort and the villages would gain them extra food and ammunition and whatever arms were in the Fort and in village shops.

Riel objected to this forthright practical plan. He argued that the Indians could not be disciplined for concerted action and ought not to be brought into alliance. His own plan of strategy was to secure important hostages without bloodshed and use them for bargaining with the Canadian government.

Just how they were to seize hostages of sufficient importance was a practical problem. He met the Ex Ovede's arguments with the suggestion that a better use of the Indians would be to ask them to create frights among the people of as many towns and villages as possible to the end that the white populations would appeal to the Canadian army for protection and that their political pressure would oblige the Canadian general to send

considerable forces to each place, thus dispersing his strength and enabling the Metis to seize either the general or important staff officers in sufficient numbers.

But the plan was too subtle to impress the excited Metis. They were willing to try to make seizures for Riel but they looked to Dumont for ways and means, and they decided to attack Fort Carleton.

Their resolution read, "Moved by Boucher, seconded by Carriere, that we desire to effect the capture of Fort Carleton without spilling any blood, and the greater our force the more certainty of attaining our object, but in case we are compelled to fight, justice compels that we should take up arms, and do you join us. We have ammunition."

Riel turned his attention to Nolin, had a private interview with him, and presently brought him into the Ex Ovede with the explanation, "Here is the big wheel. We have him with us again." Nolin was liberated on their assertions of his future loyalty.

Major Crozier of the Mounted Police at Fort Carleton heard of this decision and next day sent Tom McKay, a Scottish half-breed held in respect in the territory, to try to talk the Metis out of their decision. Fort Carleton was a former Hudson's Bay Company building, unfortified, and difficult to defend although Crozier had called in a number of volunteers from Prince Albert as auxiliaries.

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RIEL'S plans for restraining the Ex Ovede's military program were not helped by the visit of Tom McKay on behalf of the Mounted Police. McKay was well known and respected, and sometimes feared. On his way to Batoche he boldly warned everyone he met to go home and tell their neighbors to keep quiet.

He had an interview with Riel apart from the others, and almost immediately the two pursued hot argument over Metis grievances into a violent altercation. Riel taunted McKay that he had done



Led Riel's Forces

Gabriel Dumont was Louis Riel's military leader in 1885 and fought the battles of Duck Lake, Fish Creek and Batoche against Canadian government forces and troops. After the battles, Dumont succeeded in escaping to Montana. He had been an earlier leader of the Metis in their efforts to establish local self-government.

nothing to help the breeds but made profit for himself by helping their enemies. McKay sneered that Riel had kept away a long time himself. In the scuffle McKay upset a bowl of boiled bullock's blood which Riel took as a remedy for his painful stomach trouble, and when McKay sniffed at the stuff Riel shouted that McKay had shed the first blood.

Riel realized that it would be fatal to give McKay an opportunity to assume lordly airs with the Ex Ovede, and impolitic for himself, to discuss terms of any kind with

McKay. He supported the Ex Ovede loudly and contrived to turn the quarrel into an excuse to take McKay before the Ex Ovede as their prisoner and to advise an instant trial. It could not be a serious trial but it provided a means of delaying McKay.

The Ex Ovede made short work of it without any imitation of Red River ceremonies. Dumont sat down on a syrup box to act as judge. Garnot, the secretary, cleared the scraps of food from a corner of the table and made records on a torn piece of wrapping paper. Riel called up witnesses to testify that McKay worked against the interests of the half-breeds. In the midst of this performance Riel was called away and the trial soon petered out with McKay eating some food he had brought and then falling asleep in the corner. Riel woke him some time later and they had a more pleasant interview, Riel inviting McKay to join the Metis.

The outcome of the visit was that the Ex Ovede agreed to appoint two representatives to meet two representatives of the police next day half way between Batoche and the Fort. Nolin and Maxime Lepine went on behalf of the Ex Ovede and McKay and another on behalf of the police. The Ex Ovede instructed its men to demand the surrender of the entire police detachment and all government property, the police to go free on their promise to keep the peace in future, and Riel provided a letter for Crozier. Nolin took the documents but did not deliver them and the conference came to nothing.

Sunday brought another kind of trouble for Riel. The decision of the church to refuse the sacred rites to everyone involved with the formation of the Ex Ovede caused some confusion and hesitancy among the scores of mounted men who had been participating in politics since St. Joseph's day without much thought about religious connotations. The use of the church building by the Ex Ovede caused the priest to refuse church services and his absence gave Riel both the op-

portunity and the necessity to justify the course of the leaders to all those who found themselves wavering, and to emphasize his own role as Prophet of the People. In such a crisis his combination of mysticism and eloquence prevailed.

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A CLASH with the police seemed inevitable, but for the next few days Riel held back the Metis from their projected attack on Fort Carleton. Nothing happened until Thursday, March 26.

That morning Dumont changed his headquarters from Batoche to Duck Lake. Shortly before noon Dumont and a small band of Metis scouts came upon a group of policemen who were on their way to Duck Lake to recover goods taken by the Metis from the store of Hillyard Mitchell. Tom McKay, who was with the police, entered into a violent altercation with Dumont, but Dumont, observing Riel's strict injunction that there must be no shooting unless the police shot first, restrained himself. After many loud threats on both sides, the police withdrew, without accomplishing their errand.

Dumont returned to his camp and was giving a detailed account of the happening when he was interrupted by a scout arriving with word that a large body of Mounted Police were advancing upon Duck Lake village. Believing it to be the Regina reinforcements Riel and Dumont ordered out all armed strength except a small guard for their political prisoners (among who was Nolin, who had again come under suspicion of collusion with the police). Riel, who had no office in the Ex Ovede, did not bear arms. Dumont took complete control of the military operations, arranging his paltry force with great shrewdness behind adequate cover on high ground above and on three sides of the snow-covered coulee into which Major Crozier's force would come, and staging his sharp shooters in a log house. He was cheered to discover that Major Crozier com-

manded only 85 police plus 35 men from Prince Albert.

Crozier called for a parley and came forward himself with Tom McKay. Dumont sent out an old half-blind Indian chief, Falling Sand, and several Indians. Crozier asked why the Metis had so many under arms. Falling Sand asked why the police had so many men under arms. Crozier asked another question and Falling Sand again reversed his question; and, the parley went on for several minutes in this senseless fashion, until one of the Indians made a sly movement to seize McKay's revolver. McKay shot him dead.

Meantime Dumont's men had taken advantage of the delay to surround the police, with sufficient noise to attract Crozier's attention, and Crozier gave his men a general order to fire. That released Dumont from the restrictions placed on him by Riel and the Metis rushed into battle.

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ALTHOUGH the police outnumbered the Metis and were armed with better rifles and with one cannon, they were at every other possible disadvantage—surrounded in the snow-covered coulee, exposed to cross fire, without cover, and confused. When Crozier gave the order to fire he was in the line of his own cannon and the gunners could not obey the order. The next two shots were ineffective. Some one put the next shot in before the powder and the cannon was out of order for the rest of the battle.

Gabriel Dumont was wounded toward the close of the action. His brother Edouard rushed to his assistance, but Gabriel ordered him to leave him where he was and rally the men, who were showing sign of panic at the sight of the fall of Gabriel. Edouard obeyed and the Metis responded so instantly that

the police were unaware of the casualty.

Gabriel's cousin, Framboise, who had momentarily exposed himself, fell with a bullet through his arm and body, and Gabriel dragged himself to where he lay fallen in the hope of giving him assistance. But Framboise was dead and Gabriel lowered his eyes from the battle for a few moments to say a prayer for him, and then himself fell.

The battle lasted little more than half an hour. Crozier, seeing 14 of his men killed and 35 wounded, realized the hopelessness of further attack and ordered a retreat, leaving his dead on the field.

Edouard Dumont wished to charge them in retreat—He saw the practical possibility of decimating them. But Riel countermanded his order with the argument that there had been too much bloodshed already. The Metis with but five casualties, withdrew in good order to their camp, Riel rescuing a wounded policeman and taking him with them.

As the weary defeated police reached Fort Carleton they met Colonel Irvine just arrived with reinforcements of 100 men from Regina.

Riel's part in the battle had been spectacular but ineffective—except for the cease fire order. He had carried a large crucifix taken from the altar of the church at Batoche to support his eloquence in his addresses to the Metis assembled to elect the Ex Ovede and had kept it by him since. He took it with him into this battle, and his part was to race his horse about, with the crucifix raised above his head, and in a loud voice, dedicate the volleys as they were fired, to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

In the celebration of their victory, Dumont gave Riel the credit.

Chapter Twenty

In Terror of Indians

GABRIEL Dumont heard the day after the battle of Duck Lake that the Mounted Police—Crozier's force and the hundred reinforcements from Regina—were evacuating Fort Carleton for Prince Albert. Forgetting his wounds in his excitement, he instantly declared that the Lord had delivered the enemy in the hands of the Metis. They could destroy the entire force en route by ambush and harrying, and then possess Prince Albert and so prepare positions that could withstand the whole Canadian army and wear it down. His plans for such entrenchment were unique, and vivid in his mind.

But Riel forbade it—his plan being for important hostages with which to bargain. Gabriel, his wounds unhealed, once more gave in.

Riel despatched a political prisoner to Major Crozier with a chivalrous letter offering an armistice for the police to collect their dead. But Crozier put the messenger in jail and ignored the offer. Whereupon T. E. Jackson, a merchant of Prince Albert, whose brother Honore Jackson was Riel's private secretary and the only white man connected with the Ex Ovede, voluntarily approached Riel and was given leave to take the bodies and also to take back the wounded policeman whom Riel had rescued.

Jackson told Riel that Prince Albert people were alarmed lest they be attacked by Indians. Riel gave him a written message to the people of the town offering that if they would stand aloof from the police and give them no help he would see that no Indians approached the town—they could have a week to make up their minds. Riel's idea was that if the townspeople would so act, the Metis could easily seize hostages from the police by trickery without bloodshed. But before the townspeople could discuss this, the police arrived; and it came to nothing.

While these matters preoccupied the leaders, the Metis forces gave the next day to prayer for their dead and for the recovery of their wounded, and held council meetings for better organization. The ranks were impressed with a new conviction of Riel's sanctification — only Divine intercession could have led Crozier to such rashness as he had shown, they thought. Riel had thereby been proven the Prophet he had declared himself.

Riel discovered that Nolin, who had again fallen under suspicion and been left behind in prison during the battle had escaped, stolen a horse from a squaw and ridden at top speed to the police, who promptly clapped him into jail, to his intense humiliation and anger. Riel was not much bothered at the moment—but it was to be a crucial matter to him later.

The Ex Ovede members gave their attention in the next few days to both major and minor affairs as they came up, their minutes showing interest alternating almost equally between mundane and religious resolutions. They acknowledged Riel's role of Prophet by a vote of 8 to 1, the single nay being from Moise Ouelette who said that if after a time his views changed, he would record his vote so. At one time they resolved to provide a bull for one, Privideau, and his neighbors; at another they announced by resolution that hell does not last forever—"the doctrine of everlasting future punishment is contrary to Divine mercy, as well as to the charity of our Saviour, Jesus Christ; consequently the Ex Ovedate . . . establishes the truth that however long hell may last . . . it will come to an end one day."

Many such items being disposed of, Dumont occupied Fort Carleton for a few days. It proved of no use except as a gesture of triumph, and thereafter they moved their headquarters back to Batoche. For the

next six weeks they made no aggressive moves, Dumont exercising great self-restraint as Riel issued proclamations that the Metis would not continue hostilities unless again attacked and unless they knew for certain that "the Lieutenant-Governor has been instructed to deal with us, settlers struggling for our rights, as public enemies of Canada."

There were minor conflicts with the priests, Pere Vegreville and Pere Tosze being arrested April 10 charged with falsely assuring that all people who took up arms were "rebels and would find it to their damnation," but when these two signed promises of neutrality they were permitted to pursue their labors without further interference.

Dumont kept himself accurately informed of the approach of the Canadian army. He made a dozen plans to destroy railway bridges and culverts over which the troop trains must pass, but Riel forbade every such move with the argument that it would appear an astonishing crime particularly as there were many French-Canadians among the troops. Dumont retorted that the Metis should have no consideration for French-Canadians coming to kill them. But Riel prevailed with the Ex Ovede by force of prayers (he committed his prayers to writing and they make moving reading).

Dumont obeyed restlessly, until General Middleton and the advance portion of his army left Qu'Appelle, two hundred miles south of Batoche, and marched to Clarke's Crossing in one week. Not even a majority of the Ex Ovede could bind Dumontations that the Metis would not ceded, "If you do adopt a course contrary to my views I shall look upon it as permission of God."

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THROUGH the six weeks after the battle of Duck Lake, the white population of the countryside lived in terror—not of the Metis; no one expected attack upon white settlers by Metis—but, of ravage and pillage by the Indians. Those who understood the situation were alarmed that the defeat of the Mounted

Police had destroyed their prestige and authority over the Indians who, all that season, were near famine and complaining about a multitude of grievances about their ill-supplied existence on their reservations. They had already been recalcitrant at several points and had looted and rioted at Battleford within the general area of Metis operations.

Those who knew little about the Metis believed rumors that Riel, "that half-savage, illiterate, French Catholic, half-breed villain" was giving the Indians quantities of arms and inciting them to attack white settlements. Hundreds of such families lived in mortal terror that any night the Indians might fire their homes, scalp them in their beds, and loot all movable property, many sent their families away out of the country. It did not occur to them that the Metis had no arms to spare and were themselves armed only with the arms of their daily occupations and the few stocks of local merchandize — stores which they had seized, and they did not know that the Indians were starving and destitute and broken with disease. They held in their memories vivid stories of old inter-race Indian wars which had been horribly savage.

All such settlers imagined the danger of such horrors would inevitably come through the villain Riel. They were not told then nor for the next fifty years that a more real threat of a revival of Indian warfare was being made from quite another quarter, in precisely those weeks from the end of March to the middle of April.

On March 29, Sir John A. Macdonald, Prime Minister of Canada, wrote to Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney at Regina, a letter in part as follows: "It would not do to encourage an Indian war. But I understand the Crees dread the Blackfeet like the devil. Now a corps of Indian scouts under Crowfoot might be formed and kept west, but the information should be widely spread among the Crees and half-breeds that a Blackfoot force has been pre-

pared. This might have the effect of producing a panic among the Indians."

Before the letter could reach Dewdney, Macdonald, becoming impatient with mails, wired Dewdney on march 30, "Do you approve of enlisting a small body of Blackfeet under Crowfoot?"

Dewdney was privately disturbed. His reply was non-committal. "Think it would be a great service to us," he answered; "if we could secure assistance of a few Blackfeet for scouts. It would keep the balance quiet while they were at work."

A prolonged exchange of messages followed, Macdonald being persistent.

On April 3, Dewdney wired the Prime Minister: "Don't think it advisable at present to spread information about Blackfeet. Fear it would alarm and excite Crees, otherwise remain quiet. Have arranged a few Blackfeet scouts if necessary. This will be done quietly without exciting Crees."

On April 10, Macdonald again wired Dewdney: "Could body of Blackfeet in command of whites be trusted. Do you think this course should be taken to watch Red Deer?" (The town of Red Deer.)

On April 11, Dewdney wired from Blackfoot Crossing, evidently before he had received Macdonald's wire of the previous day. He said, "Blackfeet would fight if wanted for us, but unless attacked by Crees will at my request remain on reserves."

On April 13 he answered Macdonald's inquiry of April 10: "Would not advise using Blackfeet on extensive scale. They have very little ammunition, and if used would have to be supplied. No white man could control them if once started out. We have fourteen Blackfeet scouts, who report every few days at the Crossing. They are watching the Red Deer from Hand Hills to the Forks of the Red Deer, and have instructions to keep away from the whites and the Indians and report only what they see."

Fortunately Dewdney knew the country and knew the character of

Indian warfare when Indians had food and good weapons. Had a weaker, less confident official owing his lucrative appointment of Lieutenant-Governor to Macdonald, and not knowing so much about the plains country, been in office Macdonald's inquiries might have been interpreted as instructions and been immediately implemented.

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GABRIEL Dumont set out from Batoche on the evening of April 23 with a small force of less than 200 men—Metis, and a motley of Indians, Salteaux, Crees and Sioux useful in scouting and sharp shooting. They had no definite information of the strength of the Canadian army but had heard rumors that it was 5,000 strong. Riel went along. He wanted hostages. Dumont wanted action. This first action to which Riel had reluctantly consented, was designed by Dumont to try to get Riel hostages.

Riel carried no arms but only the big crucifix. This difference in equipment had come to symbolize their different authorities: Dumont controlled the force and the Ex Ovede, which all accepted as their legal instrument and in which Riel had no office; Riel symbolized his authority in the crucifix. With it he had slowed forceful action for a month during which Dumont had chafed as he abandoned half a dozen excellent plans for delaying and discouraging the Canadian army at small cost to the Metis.

In the night they were overtaken by a messenger from Edouard Dumont, left behind in charge of a small garrison at headquarters. The messenger reported that Edouard had heard that a large detachment of Mounted Police were advancing on the Fort Qu'Appelle road, toward Batoche—it was the attack they had expected ever since the threat made by a member of the Council of North West Territory—and Edouard asked that Riel or Gabriel return with as many men as could be spared. Gabriel did not credit the rumor and Riel was not disposed to turn back. The Metis took a vote and

decided that Riel should return with fifty of the 200 men.

With Riel gone, Dumont had more freedom of strategy and tactics. He planned an ambush at a coulee known as Fish Creek—called Tourond's Crossing by Metis. As Middleton would cross this place he hoped to take the General himself prisoner for Riel to have as hostage in negotiating terms with the Canadian Government.

At daybreak of April 24, the Metis under Dumont sighted the Middleton camp, took a preliminary reconnaissance, and then most of them fell back to Fish Creek. Shortly runners brought in the report that Middleton was on the march. Dumont placed 130 men in the coulee, and with the remainder, carefully picked for what he had in mind, set out to prepare an ambush for the flank of the army.

He had not gone far when he discovered horse tracks—tracks of the horses of his own men, which revealed to him that some of his men had disobeyed his orders the previous night and revealed their presence to the enemy. This upset his first plan to seize hostages.

The Metis came under fire from the advancing army and all of the Indians and many of the half-breeds who had been placed in the coulee fled. Dumont had trouble rallying his forces from a general scurry. As it was, the force was reduced to 62, of whom 47 were in the main ravine and the remainder with Dumont in the adjoining coulee.

THIS small band of poorly armed men held up for the whole day the well armed force of the Canadian army of about ten times their number. Dumont was ingenious in inventions. At one time he set fire to the prairies for a smoke cover to make a desperate attempt at dislodgement. So many other startling tactics confronted Middleton that—so he wrote later—he considered his position most serious. Middleton observed that Metis movements were directed by low whistles, which he compared to the piping of a boat-

swain. "Occasionally could be heard shouts, 'Keep back,' 'Go on,' 'This way,' 'Fire lower' but mostly they fought in grim silence. The rapidity with which some of them loaded their shot guns with old fashioned powder horns and paper wadding was marvellous. The few of them who had Winchesters ran from one part of the field to the other, strengthening their lines as circumstances directed," Middleton wrote later. Dumont had not been the mightiest buffalo hunter of the plains for nothing.

At one critical time when the Metis were cruelly pressed, Isadore Dumont started up an old French chanson of Napoleon Bonaparte's day and all joined in the chorus.

Maxime Lepine, who had backed Dumont all the recent weeks in the Ex Ovede until he had become the theme of many of Riel's most intense prayers, later gave a detailed description of the day, which has been preserved. Of the final actions, his account ran, "When they came into the wood . . . at five o'clock . . . we thought they were getting ready to take us. After that we said to one another 'We must try to get one each . . . and we must each of us fire a good shot.' Charles Trottier counted the men there, and out of 160 we had at the beginning there remained but 54. I don't know whether we counted the wounded.

"Then we consulted as to how we were to get away, and decided to wait until dark, and then run the risk of breaking our way out. But we knew that many of us would be killed. Then we thought of the wounded, and it seemed all I could give them was the crucifix I held in my hand all day, but when I spoke of that no person answered me. We were praying all the time and we had the crucifix and I said 'We shall commend ourselves to God and pray that we may have perfect contrition so that if we die we may save our souls . . . ' But Delorme did me good when he said, 'We must pray to God to get us out of this.' Almost immediately they commenced firing, not many rifle shots but four cannon shots, and two or three of the can-

non shots seemed to burst right over our heads . . . When their soldiers appeared on the hillocks, our people fired, and that made them fall back and others came to replace them."

After dusk, Dumont was able to extricate his force and remove his wounded. The rumors of an attack upon headquarters by the police forces had turned out a false alarm and Edouard Dumont, Gabriel's brother, arrived from Batoche with small reinforcements but too late to be of much use.

Gabriel and Edouard Dumont led the Metis men back to Batoche and eluded any pursuit. They did not know for three days that they had given Middleton such a check that he had decided to halt where he was for two weeks awaiting reinforcements.

Dumont immediately set all hands to work at Batoche to construct a unique system of underground fortifications of his own devising, which were to give Middleton further astonishment.

The Ex Ovede needed Riel; but Gabriel Dumont was finished with Riel's military notions. Henceforth Gabriel was in control, and he

meant to fight it out come what might.

During the weeks before the ambush of Fish Creek, Riel learned that the Indians could not be counted upon for distraction in scattered settlements. The only such activities had been by Poundmaker at Battleford and certain other chiefs in distant points and these had been made by those Indians in their own interests for redress of their own grievances.

When all relevant evidence is taken into account, Riel's letters to the chiefs seem to have been a reflection of the confused relations prevailing between the Dumont faction in the Ex Ovede and himself, in which he veered and tacked to maintain his ascendancy. He rewrote the resolutions and conclusions of the Council to appear as if he were compromising, and only a few such letters were actually delivered to the chiefs. Dumont, whose relations with the Indians were close, controlled the disposal of such Indians as were of any use, and could exert great influence upon most of the chiefs, quite apart from Riel's letters.

Chapter Twenty-One

Battle and Surrender

AFTER the battle of Fish Creek, the Metis knew that guerrilla tactics were impossible and that the supreme test was at hand. Dumont did not know for three days that the Fish Creek attack had caused General Middleton to wait there for two weeks for reinforcements before proceeding against Batoche. He plunged instantly into the fortification of Batoche by a system of trenches and rifle pits which he devised by his own wits. Some Metis deserted at this time, among them Monkman, who had been active in leadership in the early stages and was a member of the council, and many Indians sidled away.

The Metis numbers were so small compared with the task which confronted them, that an order was issued that no one should work at farming except in gardens, and there only the women should work. Their armor was only their hunting equipment and such arms as were generally employed in their everyday work. Their ordinary supplies of these had been augmented only by seizure of the guns and ammunition with which several hardware stores in the villages were stocked for the current season. Against them when he came General Middleton would have the best war equipment of the period, in ample supply.

Middleton's delay gave Dumont and Riel from April 24 to May 9 to prepare Dumont's style of fortifications and make ready to resist a force six or seven times their numbers, assemble and cache food and ammunition and such other simple necessities.

Scouts brought word of Middleton's march from Clarke's Crossing on May 8. Dumont in concealment, watched the troops all that day until they arrived at Dumont Crossing late in the afternoon. He watched their burning and wrecking of his own buildings there without a flicker of emotion—his store, house and barns, the best buildings in the

whole country. He was waiting for their entry into Batoche, to judge how best to conclude his preparations and readjust his forces.

But his self-control burst into intense excitement when he suddenly noticed them load the heavy timbers on the steamboat, Northcote, on the Saskatchewan river. The boat had been conveying supplies by river alongside the marching troops. At sight of the unexpected operation it flashed into his mind that the Canadians intended to attack Batoche by river as well as by land. It had not previously occurred to him that the invaders would adopt any such made plan as to attempt to bring such a ship into action in that rapid, shallow, uncertain river at Batoche. He raced his horse into the village to amend his plan of defence.

Battle began next morning at eight o'clock with a naval attack by the Northcote. As she came into view, thirty Metis concealed along the banks poured into her sides and deck such furious volleys of fire that the combatants on board were unable to reply, and the boat drifted helplessly through the village. The Metis used the ferry cable for attempted interception and demolished her smoke stack and other deck gear, after which the vessel drifted helplessly onto a mud bank beyond the village and was out of commission thereafter. This success altered Middleton's plans.

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THE diversion of the thirty Metis left 205 men to meet the attack of the Canadians with about 1,200 men, arriving an hour later. But the Metis were completely concealed in Dumont's trenches and rifle pits. Middleton's men investigated and shelled three houses, responded to a flag of truce at the church and took custody of nuns and priests who rushed out, and Middleton after a careful survey in which he saw no

other human beings, selected a ridge commanding the village as his artillery site. His artillery fired a few shells into town as the soldiers advanced.

As they came on smartly and confidently, they were suddenly met with withering fire from the trenches, and gave way. This went on all day until Middleton withdrew his men to a retreat hastily prepared out of range of the trench fire. The Metis pursued the Canadians until they came to the range of the zereba and kept up their attack until midnight. At the close of that day's action they were satisfied and hopeful. Next day they would be 30 stronger by the return of the Northcote attackers.

In the Canadian army, the rank and file was keyed up with excitement but the officers were at variance with each other. Middleton was a British officer and had no confidence in his Canadian volunteers, and nothing but scorn for his volunteer Canadian officers, some of whom were Canadian members of parliament or men with political interests. Jealousy became exaggerated by the failures and humiliations of the day.

In the late afternoon of the first day, Middleton sent Lord Melgund, his chief of staff (later Earl Minto, Governor-General of Canada) to Humboldt, about thirty miles away, where he met Colonel C. T. Denison and explained that the news was not good, and that Middleton, while not defeated, had had a serious check and had fallen back a little way with cover of his wagons. Melgund wired a code message to Ottawa.

The second day was a repetition of the first.

The break came on the third day when Dumont's men began to run out of ammunition. The Metis women collected spent bullets of the Canadians and moulded them into balls for the Metis rifles. Middleton staged a feint attack by the cemetery and some Metis could not resist following him; and those who remained could not resist rushing out of their trenches into the real

attack in the centre of the village. They lost ground, and all but lost their trenches and pits. Dumont considered taking up new ground across the river, but desisted when he saw late at night the Canadians abandoning their gains and retreating to their sleeping ground. He could not pursue them for lack of ammunition.

A traitor, so Dumont said, informed the Canadians of this lack. Next day the Canadians resumed their attack with greater vigor and confidence. Without enough ammunition on this, the fourth day, Dumont and Riel conferred on how best to extricate the people of the village, whom they did not wish to abandon in a retreat.

In an effort to slow up the advance, Riel was to enter into negotiations with Middleton, while Dumont would take up new position on nearby hills.

Riel thereupon sent a message by a prisoner protesting against slaughter of Metis women and children and threatening to kill their Canadian prisoners as a counter measure. Middleton replied politely advising the Metis to place their women and children in one building which he would respect as neutral.

The messenger advised Riel to go to Middleton "who is a kind, polite gentleman." Riel consulted Dumont and then sent another letter thanking Middleton for his prompt answer to the first one, and adding, "I do not like war, and if you do not retreat and refuse an interview, the question will remain the same as to the prisoners."

Middleton was considering this, when some of his soldiers under a Canadian officer who was a member of parliament, broke discipline and swept in on the Metis trenches, which they had no difficulty taking, as the Metis were gone.

In the lull of the interchange; while Dumont kept up fierce volleys from his knoll, the Metis had got away half a mile. Batoche was abandoned.

The war was over. But the Metis men and their families were at large and Louis Riel was at large.

RIEL, who spent some part of each day writing, left no written record of the next several days of his life after the flight from Batoche.

Gabriel Dumont later dictated an account of his next few days. All the Metis people, women, and children as well as men, were homeless in the brush and the weather was bitter cold. "It was heart rending to see the poor people crouching in the hay like animals for warmth," Dumont related. "When I saw the bare feet of children I made sandals of hay for them. The women were very courageous."

He stole into the village for clothes for his wife. Entirely respectful of the Mounted Police in peace time, and always with respect for human life in peace time, he had different standards for war. He saw a policeman at the door of the house he wished to enter. "I picked him off. Another policeman came to look at the body and I picked him off. Then I went in and got the clothing and moccasins I wanted for my wife in the woods," his later account ran.

Later Dumont found Riel still intent on resistance. "Are we overthrown?" Dumont remarked that Riel should have known when they took up arms they might go down. Dumont had faced that with cold calculation. Now he himself was still at war. All day he had fought a one-man war with the Canadians searching the brush for prisoners, and he proposed to continue — he was thrilled with the game. He offered young Madame Riel a share of his looted clothing, but Riel would accept no special favors for his family.

On the second afternoon Middleton sent a letter by Moise Ouelette, who had been taken prisoner. It read: "Mr. Riel—I am ready to receive you and your council and protect you until your case has been decided by the Canadian government." Ouelette hunting for Riel found Dumont. "You go to the devil," Dumont said angrily. "You say to Middleton that I am in the

woods and that I have ninety cartridges to shoot his men."

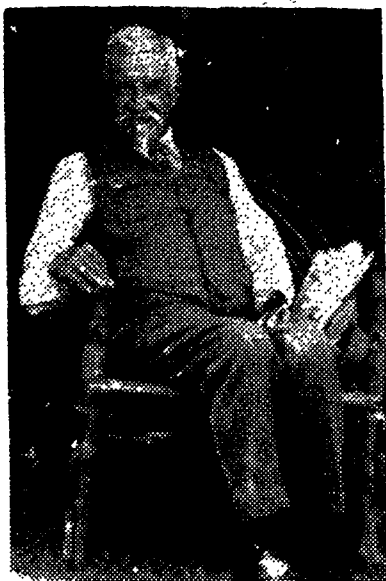
Napoleon Nault who had lain in cover by day, hunted for his horses by night. When he had found a number and recovered saddles for some of them, he chanced upon Riel and proposed that the two families escape to Montana together.

Riel thanked him but stubbornly rejected every argument. Nault's quotation later of Riel ran: "Cousin you must go. But I am going to surrender. After my enemies get me they will be joyous and satisfied and my people will get justice and be safe. If I do not then the others will be caught and punished for me." They parted and Nault and Johnny Ross and their party, easily evading the police, got safely to Montana in sixteen days.

Dumont continued his one-man war until his father came upon him and imposed upon him his parental authority — although Dumont was going on toward fifty years of age. The father told Gabriel to "stop behaving like an Indian" and to leave Saskatchewan for a country where he could live a civilized life. "I always obeyed the counsel of my father," Dumont's account ran. He thereupon gathered up his wife and moved south by easy stages into Montana.

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RIEL'S problem in surrender was to find a safe person to take him into custody. The brush was full of troops who would prefer to kill him on sight. He felt that no white flag would protect him. He must make his way by stealth and cunning to General Middleton's person. It would be no easy matter. But once in the protection of the General in person, he felt, the General would regard him as a political prisoner and would deliver him to the custody of the Canadian parliament. He would be given a political trial and at last he could get his story of the Metis out to the whole people of Canada. He retained a touching faith in the justice of the whole people of Canada, once they knew the truth about Louis Riel. The public had never heard the true



Riel's Captor

Robert Armstrong, a noted buffalo hunter, became chief scout for General Middleton's North West Field Force that fought the Battle of Batoche against Riel's motley band of Metis. It was Armstrong to whom Riel surrendered and who led the Metis leader to General Middleton's headquarters. This picture of Armstrong was taken in his Calgary home when he was 89 years old.

description of the Metis; there had been a screen of deceiving politicians. But once they knew they would give justice to "the little Metis nation which has a mission, and a beautiful one."

He bade goodbye to Nault and took cover. At 10:30 next morning, Friday, May 14, he gave himself up to Robert Armstrong, one of Middleton's scouts and couriers, and his two companions, Houri and Diehl. It was a fortunate encounter as Armstrong was of Middleton's staff and under no other officer's authority. He had been a famous buffalo hunter, knew the wilds and was familiar with all the natives. He had been taken on Middleton's staff imme-

diately after the battle of Fish Creek. Riel had known him in Montana.

When Riel showed him Middleton's letter, Armstrong remarked that he had seen that bit of paper before—had stood beside the General as he wrote it. Armstrong understood even better than Riel the danger of getting him safely to Middleton, and he concealed him for awhile, sending Houri ahead with other Metis prisoners and Diehl to announce the arrest to Middleton.

When they were alone Riel handed over a revolver which he had concealed in his shirt and which Armstrong had overlooked in his casual search. Armstrong mounted his horse and Riel trudged along on foot.

"I knew Riel well and liked him," Armstrong told the author of this biography years later, "He was such a decent fellow that I didn't feel right riding while he was walking. When I'd made sure no one of importance was in sight I gave him a hand and pulled him up behind me on my horse. And then we rode along and were both comfortable."

Later in the afternoon they came upon a pony loose on the range, and both dismounted to round it up. Armstrong gave his blankets for a make-shift saddle and Riel rode the pony. But nearing Middleton's camp, Riel, with a delicate sense of Armstrong's position, turned the pony loose and marched into camp behind his "captor's" horse. As they entered, soldiers rushed out. "Is that Riel you've got?" they shouted. "No, only his cook," Armstrong said quick-wittedly—he took no chances of mob action even within sight of the General's tent.

Riel was introduced to Middleton who shook hands with him and invited him to a seat on the bed—the only seat available.

From Middleton's headquarters he was sent next day under guard to Regina, the capital of the North West Territory and headquarters of the Mounted Police. It was a journey of six days. Captain George Holmes Young, who had been a prisoner of the Metis on one occa-

sion in Red River, was in charge, and among the guards was Rev. C. B. Pitblado, chaplain to one of Middleton's battalions.

Riel was immediately on easy terms with all, and through the six days conversed incessantly — with Young on the military strategies at Batoche, with Pitblado about his religious convictions, and with all guards about a multitude of subjects they or he brought up. For Riel it was a relaxation after his 60 days of armed tumult.

In the eight weeks before his trial, he maintained this pleasant frame of mind and conversational habit, talking easily and often eloquently to all who came to his cell, and being uniformly courteous to all members of the prison staff. When he was informed that his trial would be before a local court in Regina, he was surprised and deeply disappointed but he accepted it without very much protest. He reflected that once be-

fore the Canadian government had promised him an amnesty but had not honored the promise, and did not blame Middleton for what he thought was this dishonesty.

Early in June he received a message from Archbishop Tache to the effect that friends in Quebec, organized by Eugene Fiset, M.P. for Rimouski, who had been his classmate at Montreal College and one of his advisers when he had gone to Ottawa as M.P. for Provencher, had retained three eminent Quebec lawyers for his defence.

He had intended to conduct his own defence. While he was gratified by the show of friendship he was without enthusiasm for the assistance but accepted it with dignity. The arrangement would interfere with his own plans for defence, but he was told that he would have an opportunity to address the court himself and on that understanding he consented to have them come.

Chapter Twenty-Two

The Trial Begins

RIEL'S trial on the charge of high treason began in Regina, July 20, 1885.

The defence counsel, retained by Eugene Fiset and his associates, arrived only a few days in advance. When Riel outlined his plan of defence they received it coldly, and presently told him that they had already decided to make a plea of insanity. Riel was astonished and outraged, and for the first time since his surrender lost his temper and stormed with indignation. He declared that his reputation would be ruined and his further usefulness destroyed. The lawyers were not interested in those aspects; they said that only on such a plea could his life be saved. Riel said that his life so saved would be "the life of an animal."

But he realized eventually that the lawyers had been chosen and sent and were paid for by persons who professed friendship and he hesitated to assert his authority and decline their services—which might be interpreted as not quite sane behavior. He recovered himself; but friction had started.

From the prisoner's dock July 20 he saw the most brilliant court assemblage in the legal records of Canada. The Crown was represented by Christopher Robinson, most eminent counsel among English-speaking advocates; B. B. Osler, then at the beginning of a career unsurpassed in forensic power; T. C. Burbidge, Deputy Minister of Justice of Canada; T. C. Casgrain, orator in both French and English, and D. L. Scott, later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alberta.

The defence was represented by equally eminent counsel: Charles Fitzpatrick, later knighted and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada; F. X. Lemieux, later knighted and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Quebec; J. S. Greenshields, of Montreal, counsel

of great ability, and T. C. Johnson, of Regina.

In sharp contrast to all this brilliance at the Bar was the local Stipendiary Magistrate aided by a local Justice of the Peace at the Bench. The jury was composed of only six men, that number being customary in the Territory.

The charge preferred against Riel was unusual in every respect. He was accused of high treason, which is the offence of a subject who takes up arms against his sovereign. But Riel was a citizen of the United States; legally naturalized, and the fact was well known to authorities. The statute covering the offence had been passed in the year 1351 in the reign of Edward III. The charge itself contained 2,000 words, equal to two newspaper columns. It ran, in part:

"Louis Riel not regarding the duty of allegiance, nor having the fear of God in his heart and seduced by the instigation of the devil as a false traitor . . . together with divers other false traitors unknown . . . armed with pistols, bayonets and other weapons . . . did maliciously and traitorously attempt and endeavor by force of arms to subvert and destroy the government of this realm and deprive and depose our said Lady, the Queen of and from the style, honor and kingly name of the Imperial Crown of this realm in contempt of our said Lady the Queen and her laws to the evil example of all others in like case offending."

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ONE such charge was made against Riel for each of the battles of Duck Lake, Fish Creek and Batoche, and another complete set of charges having regard to Riel's alien nationality beginning, "That the said Louis Riel then living under the protection of our said Lady the Queen, not regarding the duty of allegiance" etc.

"I have the honor to answer the court that I am not guilty," Riel responded politely when the charge was read.

The defence asked for a delay of one month in order to get Dumont, Nault and Dumais from Montana, for whom they wanted a safe conduct guarantee from the government. They also wanted medical men from Montreal and priests from the northern part of the North West Territory. The Crown would recommend no safe conduct for Dumont and the others. They might come and give evidence, but at their own risk. It also objected to a delay of one month, but consented to the fetching of the medical men and priests. The court adjourned for one week.

When court was resumed, Mr. Osler, placing the case before the jury, described the offence as "the highest known in the land" and promised to prove that Riel organized and led the uprising and that he was not so much interested in the welfare of the half-breeds as in his own enrichment. He referred to the relations of Riel and the church, declaring that when he found that the church to which he belonged was against him in his movement, he had more ground to play upon his material and to feed his own vanity and ambition and had himself named as leader and prophet of his new religion.

"We seek to bring home on those counts treason involving brave men's blood," said Osler in conclusion. "Treason which roused the whole country, treason sounding from the dead bodies lying on the bloodstained snow, and which brought a response from end to end of the land, which would make any man with reasonable ideas in his head tremble at the thought of power invoked by such a crime. That act of treason brought an armed force from the east. From every town and city men rallied to protect the integrity of the country."

The Crown and the defence soon revealed their plan of action in the direct and the cross examinations. The Crown, knowing that Riel was

not an officer of the Ex Ovede (the Metis provisional council) which was the body responsible for and directing the rising, and that he did not appear in any capacity upon its records, attempting to prove that he planned, organized and directed every move it made.

The defence, with its plea of insanity and irresponsibility of the prisoner ever in view immediately stressed his fantastic political and religious views, his moments of great excitement, and when occasion offered, placed emphasis on his humane conduct. They attempted now and again in a mild manner to introduce the grievances of the half-breeds for to have overlooked those altogether would have impressed the jury of six local men unfavorably.

Dr. Willoughby testified to a conversation he had with Riel at the beginning of the demonstration of armed force, an occasion when Riel had spoken to Willoughby in somewhat grandiose terms of fanciful future plans for establishing the Metis as a separate nation. Tom McKay testified to the details of the altercation he had with Riel when he had gone to the Ex Ovede with a warning from the police, the dish of blood which had been overturned, and the trial to which he had been subjected.

In cross-examination he stressed Riel's excitements but also referred to his courtesy when his anger had passed. He admitted that he himself was entitled to script which he had not been given. McKay's reference to the dish of blood became the foundation for subsequent rumors of Riel's "pagan blood sacrifices."

Astley, a prisoner of the Metis in the Duck Lake affair, said that Riel had conducted the negotiations with Middleton without reference to any Council and ordered men in and out of the rifle pits during the battle of Batoche. Peter Tompkins, in cross examination, declared that Riel after Duck Lake, did not thank the Lord for the victory but only the saints. In cross-examination George Ness a defaulter from the Metis referred to Riel's trouble with Father Moulin and said that

the prisoner had referred to Archbishop Tache and Bishop Grandin as rogues and thieves. George Kerr, storekeeper, testified that Riel was in command when the Metis seized his store and took ammunition and again in cross-examination that Riel had been a guest of honor at a banquet earlier in the year when Riel proposed a toast to the Queen. Other witnesses gave evidence which created little excitement.

Riel was unmoved and not greatly concerned while the Crown lawyers attempted to fix upon him the

leadership and direction of the movement. But he took a keen interest in the evidence and made extensive notes of the testimony of each witness, and prepared numerous questions which he submitted to his counsel for cross-questions. They paid only cursory attention to his suggestions. He was disturbed and vexed when his counsel made light of his political policy and his religious views, and was distressed at other attempts to prove from Crown witnesses that he was mentally irresponsible.



Chapter Twenty-Three

The Defence Breaks

RIEL'S forbearance of his unwelcome Counsel's line of defence broke in the midst of the evidence of Charles Nolin called by the Crown.

Charles Nolin was his cousin. He had played false to Louis in 1870 in the Red River activities. But he had warmly supported the invitation to Riel to come to Saskatchewan from Montana and had given him the hospitality of his home in the first months. At the formation of the Ex Ovede he had been one of its members but had fallen under suspicion of the others who had put him on trial for disloyalty and swiftly sentenced him to be shot, without however making any arrangements for his execution.

Riel had talked to him and not only released him from detention but vouched for his loyalty in future. Nolin had again fallen under suspicion of the Ex Ovede and been put in detention. He had broken jail during the Duck Lake battle, stolen a horse and gone to the Mounted Police, who had clapped him into jail and held him until just before the trial.

From the outset Nolin displayed an animosity on the witness stand which mounted soon to obvious bitterness. Speaking French, he took advantage of it to give answers to Crown Counsel which exceeded the questions asked. He did not limit himself to evidence that might convict the prisoner but aimed to discredit him to such an extent that some of his evidence embarrassed the Crown lawyers. He told a story of Riel's writing a book in buffalo blood containing all his prophecies and discussed the compensation claim, involving with it a private transaction in such a confused manner so that no person could understand the drift.

He declared that Riel had written a book which threatened the destruction of Canada, England, the United States and Rome. He de-

clared that Riel had threatened to bring foreign armies into the country to destroy Manitoba and take possession of the North West. His excitement mounting, he told the court that he had been forced to join the movement to save his own life, denied that the resistance had been incited by the rumors of the approach of five hundred policemen to capture the Metis and insisted that Riel hated the police before that ever since, in fact, the scandal of a mounted police officer and Madame Riel.

Then he began to give the details of the scandal.

At that point Riel interrupted the court and asked permission to ask a question himself, before the witness should leave the box.

The magistrate, taken by surprise, advised Riel to ask his question through his lawyers, adding that he might address the court himself at the conclusion of the trial, before the case should go to the jury.

Fitzpatrick, leading counsel, sternly insisted that everything done in the case must be done by counsel, and further informed the magistrate, "For the last two days we have felt ourselves in this position, that this man is actually obstructing the management of this case. He must be given to understand that he will not be allowed to interfere in it, or else it will be absolutely useless for us to continue further in it."

Osler said the Crown had no objection to the prisoner's asking questions of the witnesses.

The magistrate then asked the prisoner three times, "Are you defended by counsel?"

Riel made no answer until the third interrogation. Then he said, "Partly. My cause is partly in their hands."

"Now stop," said the magistrate. "Are you defended by counsel or are you not?"

Riel replied that he did not intend to leave his counsel aside but

he wanted his case to be defended by the best means under the circumstances. His counsel came from Quebec and they did not understand the men giving evidence or the circumstances. "They lost three quarters of the opportunities for good questions," he added.

The magistrate again admonished him to tell his counsel the questions he wanted asked. Riel replied that he had already two hundred questions. At the suggestion of Mr. Fitzpatrick the court adjourned for a few minutes.

On resuming, Mr. Lemieux, who had taken no part in the previous discussion, spoke on behalf of all the defence lawyers, saying that they had done their best to help the prisoner but that he was not satisfied and appeared to think they were not putting all the questions they should. They had decided that if the prisoner insisted on putting questions they could not continue the case. They thought it was too late for the prisoner to disavow counsel.

Riel was not convinced, and insisted that he wanted to ask that witness some questions. The judge explained that he could not prevent him if he desired but warned him that if he persisted in doing so, his counsel would not continue to defend him. Fitzpatrick informed the judge that they had asked the prisoner a dozen times to suggest some questions but that he had said he knew all about it himself.

"I have been insisting since yesterday on this," said Riel, "in the hope that they would make that concession to my interest and to the cause they defend. As they are determined to go on, I will assert that while I do not wish to restrain them, I cannot abandon my dignity. Here I have to defend myself against the accusation of high treason or I have to consent to an animal life in an asylum. I don't care much about animal life if I am not allowed to carry with it the moral existence of an intellectual human being."

After some further discussion Riel seemed to consent to the examination proceeding, but when Lemieux

asked Nolin a question Riel again asked permission to put a question himself. To Lemieux he said that he had no question unless he could put it himself.

The judge discharged Nolin from the witness box, and that seemed to be the solution of the difficulty, as Riel made no more interruptions. Riel explained later that he had wished to ask Nolin if he (Nolin) had not taken the same solemn oath as the prisoner himself, but the defence counsel had no desire to have the solemn oath discussed. One visible result of Riel's interruptions was that in the confusion following it no one asked Nolin any questions about the scandal involving Riel's wife which Nolin had launched upon and which had excited Riel.

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THE defence called two priests, two alienists and the secretary of the Ex Ovede. Father Andre told the court that the grievances of the Metis were serious, and that Riel had been justified in coming to Saskatchewan to aid in getting redress. He added that although well informed and rational when discussing literature and science, Riel was irrational when discussing religion and politics. Father Fourmand testified that as soon as the rebellion had started Riel had lost all control of himself. "It appeared as if there were two men in the prisoner; in private conversation he was an affable, polite pleasant and charitable man to me. I noticed that when he was quietly talking about the affairs of politics and government, and he was not contradicted, he was quite rational, but as soon as he was contradicted on these subjects then he would become a different man, and would be carried away by his feelings. He would go as far as to use violent expressions even to his friends."

Garhot, the secretary of Ex Ovede, testified that he had heard Riel say that the spirit of Elias was in him, and that he was representing St. Peter. Riel had been his guest two nights and had kept everyone awake by his loud and long prayers. In

cross-examination he said that Riel could do anything he liked with the Metis.

Dr. Roy, superintendent of Beaufort Asylum (one of the two asylums where Riel had been secreted by Dr. Lachappelle, when he sought Lachappelle's help while his presence in Canada was illegal), said that Riel suffered from megalomania, a malady, one characteristic of which was that patients show good judgment in all cases not particularly connected with their particular illusion. He was suffering from a recurrence during the uprising, Dr. Roy was certain, and was not master of his acts. To the question whether the evidence upon which Dr. Roy based his opinion might be a consistent fraud, Dr. Roy said it might be possible, but he did not think so. Riel, he explained, was under a delusion that he had a special mission to fulfill and they never could prove to him that the mission did not exist. Riel retained the impression that he had a mission when he had nothing to gain by it.

(The medical staff of another asylum in which Riel had been secreted for a similar period, had refused to testify to Riel's insanity; instead they had written to the Canadian government that they believed Riel, when in the asylum, to be sane but in very poor general health.)

Dr. Daniel Clark, medical superintendent of Toronto Asylum, gave the opinion that Riel was insane in the months of March, April and May, and did not know the difference between right and wrong. Dr. James Wallace, superintendent of Hamilton Asylum, witness for the Crown, swore that he could discover no insanity, but admitted in cross examination that he had not had much opportunity for examination. Dr. Jukes, surgeon of the Mounted Police at Regina, testified that he had seen nothing to give him the impression of insanity; but he admitted he was not an authority on mental diseases.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Sane or Insane?

FITZPATRICK, Riel's leading counsel, made a strong presentation of the argument that his client was insane. "Had Riel been sane, and had he exercised the ordinary dictates of prudence, caution and common sense," he argued, "all he had to do was to stay with the Metis and remain in possession of their confidence, and some day he would have arrived at the highest pinnacle of his ambition, whatever his ambition might have been."

As he went on, with great effect, to build up an impression that Riel's insanity was the issue, Riel sensed the hostility to himself of the audience in the court room, where he had not one friend. Regina was far south of the seat of the Metis trouble, was populated with English-speaking whites who seldom had contact with French-speaking Metis, knew little of their handicaps and prolonged injustices, and had met only a few.

Regina was the capital of the North West Territory where dwelt the Lieutenant-Governor and most members of his council, and Regina people had relatively little to complain about in the administration of the territory.

It was also the headquarters of the Royal North West Mounted Police full of enthusiasm for the force's high reputation, and influenced to highest respect for its personnel by daily contact with its officers. It was against these that a few hundred half-breeds of the far north had incomprehensibly taken up arms and waged a bloody war in three fantastic battles.

Riel had quarrelled with the Roman Catholic church and set himself up against Bishop Grandin who was familiar to the Regina population and noted for his courteous behavior to Protestants.

Riel had not even one Metis friend in the courtroom. The only Metis present were Nolin and a few turncoats who had invited him to Sas-

katchewan barely one year before but, so it appeared to Regina, had obviously regretted their act. One near relation of Riel had gone into the witness box against him with more shocking stories of Riel's curious beliefs and behaviors than any other witness.

Those tricky lawyers from Quebec sent out by French Canadians even though two of them were English-speaking, had decided in Regina that Riel's infamy was so great that it could not be defended and now Fitzpatrick was making a powerful speech to try to convince everybody that Riel was insane. Yet the medical witnesses had been divided and contradictory of each other.

The audience watched Riel where he sat. Few of the audience had ever seen him before. What they saw was a thick-set sturdy man a little above average height. A mass of chestnut hair, waving and bushy, and a thick soft beard of lighter color framed a large rectangular face, strong and aggressive. Breadth and height of forehead opened his countenance. His eyes were full, bright and sparkling, of an indeterminate color between hazel and gray blue. An unusually prominent nose, fine but large, destroyed the otherwise symmetrical balance of his face and emphasized the convexity of the frontal profile. But the most striking feature of his profile was the skull formation of the back of his head, the very high crown turning abruptly down into an almost perpendicular line. Had the audience been of later date it would have noticed in that an astonishing similarity to the skull of George Bernard Shaw.

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THE general appearance of energy, self-reliance, activity and aggressiveness was particularized by the noticeable height of the skull above the ears, by full lips set in moulds of experience, firmness and courage, and by the straight line

of the eyelids, somewhat harsh and obstinate looking. The texture of the skin was fine over the weathered pigmentation.

The whole effect was of energy, self-confidence, firmness of conviction and assertion, modified by lines of reserve and subtle suggestions of obstinacy, and warmed by impatience and aggressiveness. A foundation of physical strength emphasized the powers of resistance to restraint, and gave a feeling of solidity beneath certain suggestions of high minded dreaminess.

When he spoke, they heard a powerful voice, rich, clear and resonant, used with controlled modulations, and he spoke fluently in perfect English with an interesting trace of French accent.

Obviously this was a man who could "do anything he wanted with Metis people"—many of whom were swarthy uncouth half-breeds who could not speak English.

If this man were not insane he was a dangerous criminal traitor. Fitzpatrick with impressive eloquence was arguing that Riel was insane. Was he? Fitzpatrick was working powerfully on the emotions of his audience and was difficult to resist.

The jury members had never seen Riel before. But they had a keen sense of their responsibility and felt obliged to listen to the evidence with greater care than the spectators, and they were six men who had a good general knowledge of the conditions of the territory. They were kept together and under guard throughout the trial and permitted no contact with the public, so that they were uninfluenced by the reactions of the spectators. They influenced each other in their private intercourse shut up together.

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WHAT they were thinking was not evident to the spectators. Something of what they were thinking they told years later. Mr. W. G. Brooks of Indian Head, the only member of the jury surviving when this biography of Riel was written (1926-28) describes their state of mind in these, his own terms:

"He seemed to us no more insane

than any of the lawyers and they were the ablest men in Canada. He was even more interesting than some of them.

"We were in sympathy with the Metis because we knew they had good cause for what they did. We often remarked during the trial that we would like to have the Minister of the Interior in the prisoner's box charged with inciting the Metis to revolt by his gross neglect and careless indifference. We developed a liking for Riel too, although we had never seen him until the trial began.

"One of the other members of the jury said, 'This man is in a bad hole. I wish we knew a way to help him out.' That was the concern of all of us. There was no division or difference of any kind. We just couldn't believe the man was insane."

In their preoccupation with this problem, Fitzpatrick's potent eloquence failed to impress them with the conviction he was trying to establish; but that eloquence distracted their everyday non-legal minds so that to them the issue became not whether or not Riel was guilty of high treason according to the absurd sounding definition of high treason in the formal charge, but whether or not Riel was guilty of insanity—and in 1885 the popular feeling about insanity was not that it was a disease but was rather, somehow, an offence, a repulsive abnormality associated with bad behavior in general.

High treason was not a familiar crime. No person of whom the jury knew or had heard in their own times had been hanged for high treason. The Metis and Riel had done nothing to endanger Queen Victoria—that was just absurd legal terminology of no practical significance; lawyer's fancy talk. Their commonsense did not accept the idea that men struggling to get redress of visible wrongs were in any way comparable with the traitors of history books, and that what Riel had done could lead to any such severe punishment as hanging.

The members of the jury listened to Fitzpatrick and looked at Riel.

They didn't believe Fitzpatrick—but they had not yet heard Riel. He had spoken only a few times so far, and he too appeared to feel that Fitzpatrick was his enemy.

They postponed judgment until they heard Riel.

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RIEL knelt in prayer in the prisoner's box when the presiding Magistrate told him he might address the court before his case was sent to the jury.

"You will see by the papers that I am naturally inclined to think of God at the beginning of my actions," he explained as he began. Then his keen sensitivity detecting the air of suspicion in the audience, he added, "It would be easy for me to play insanity because the circumstances are such as to excite any man. I hope you will not take it as a play of insanity."

He began his prayer nervously with broken, unfinished sentences but supplication brought steadiness. He asked for blessings upon himself in his time of need, upon his lawyers, upon the lawyers of the Crown who had shown fairness which at first he did not expect, and for all those about him. "Change the curiosity of those who are paying attention to me into sympathy for me," he concluded.

Rising from his knees to a dramatic pose he began his address with a striking apostrophe of his country. "The North West is my mother. It is my mother country and although my mother country is sick and confined in a certain way, there are some who come from the Lower Country to help her to take care of me during her sickness, and I am sure that my mother country will not kill me, more than my own mother did forty years ago when I came into the world, because a mother is always a mother, and even if I have my little faults, if she can see that I am true she will be full of love for me.

"It has been said that I am egotistic. Perhaps I am. A man cannot have individuality without paying attention to himself."

He referred to his coming to Saskatchewan and the petition to the Canadian government. "When the government did not answer, then I began to speak of myself and not before. So my particular interest came after the public interest."

He was speaking directly after Fitzpatrick and Fitzpatrick's skilled address had impressed not only the spectators and the jury with a sense that the issue was not whether Riel was or was not guilty of high treason but whether or not he was insane; but he had also impressed Riel with this sense of shifted emphasis.

Riel had intended to use this opportunity to place before whatever tribunal he should face, a moving description of the grievances of the Metis, and he had worked endlessly ever since his arrival at the Regina prison to compose the story. Hearing Fitzpatrick build up relentlessly the arguments for his insanity he had imposed a rigid tensi of restraint upon his nerves. But as he had listened to the implacable development of Fitzpatrick, his angry resistance to this line of defence had mounted powerfully until his strong pride took possession of him. He could not stand it not to answer Fitzpatrick.

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AT this point he deserted his carefully prepared speech and impulsively entered upon an extemporaneous defence against his own leading counsel. Swept along on this emotional tide he became immersed in this effort. He broke up the coherent arguments of the political situation into fragments which he centred on this central theme of his sanity.

"It is true that I have believed for years that I had a mission," he admitted defiantly. "I believe I have a mission at this very time. It encourages me to speak to you with more confidence in all the imperfections of my English. I have that mission, and with the help of God who is in the box with me, and on the side of my lawyers and even with the Crown and the jury, to help me, and to prove by that extra-

ordinary help that there is a Providence in my trial, as there was a Providence in the battle of Saskatchewan."

He inevitably altered the emphasis of his references to the wrongs of the Metis from a general presentation in logical order, into defence of his personal conduct or as an argument against the contention of his own counsel.

"I found the half-breeds eating rotten pork supplied by the Hudson's Bay Company. They were deprived of responsible government and public liberties." He referred to his own work to frame petitions for the correction of these situations, which the Metis had presented to the government. If he had been permitted to ask questions of the witnesses a different light would have been thrown upon his policies, he said.

"I was working in Manitoba first to get free institutions for that province. They now have those institutions in Manitoba and try to improve them, while I who obtained them am forgotten as dead. But after I had obtained, with the help of others, a constitution for Manitoba—when the Canadian government was not willing to inaugurate it at the proper time—I worked till the inauguration took place, and that is why I was banished five years."

From his achievement in Manitoba, he turned to his personal mission. He quoted Bishop Bourget (his friend and counselor in the first years after his banishment) who had said 'Riel had no narrow view. He is a man to accomplish great things.' He referred to his many escapes from death with bullets going through his hat. (It was from the Quebec Bishop Bourget's fostering of him in his banishment that he had attained complete confidence that he did have a mission.)

"I have been in an asylum," he admitted, "but I thank the lawyers of the Crown who destroyed the testimony of Dr. Roy, because I have always believed that I was put in an asylum without reason. Today my pretension is guaranteed."

HE examined the faces of the jury for the effect of his direct candid references to this matter, and presently burst forth dramatically, raising his powerful voice to its highest resonance, "Even if I was going to be sentenced by you, gentlemen of the jury, I have the satisfaction if I die, that I will not be reputed by all men as insane, as a lunatic."

He touched on his personal relations with Charles Nolin, and told of the offer made to him of a place for himself on the Council of the North West Territory, and then turned again to his prophetic distinction. He had been acknowledged as a prophet by the half-breeds, he reminded the court, and the half-breeds were intelligent people.

"If the half-breeds acknowledge me as a prophet; if the priests say I am polite; if the officers come into the box and swear that I am polite and decent; then combine all together and you have a decent prophet. If I am insane, my heart will tell what is in me."

He denied that he had any intention of setting himself up as a pope, as one witness had suggested. He believed that Bishop Bourget had succeeded in spirit and truth. "Why?" asked Riel. "Because while Rome had not paid attention, Bishop Bourget had done so."

He reviewed, but in a not too orderly form, actions of Archbishop Tache and Bishop Grandin which had created his suspicion of their sincerity.

He told the court that on three different occasions the Ex Ovede council had decided to send men to the United States to notify the nationalities to come to the assistance of the Metis. "But these delegations waited for my orders and were not sent."

"My reputation, my life, my liberty are at your discretion, gentlemen of the jury," Riel began his direct appeal, "So confident am I that I have not the slightest anxiety, not even the slightest doubt, as to your verdict. The calmness of my mind concerning the favorable decision which I expect does not come from

any unjustifiable presumption on my part. I simply trust through God's help, that you will balance everything in a conscientious manner, and that having heard what I have to say, that you will acquit me. I respect you, although your are only half a jury" (six men; the usual number elsewhere in Canada was twelve) "but your number of six does not prevent me from giving you my confidence, which I would grant to an additional six men."

In his conclusion he reverted to his habit of punning to produce an effect of mordant humor in an ironical attack upon the evidence of the medical experts. They had spoken much of "irresponsibility" of the insane, and of "paralysis" as symptom of a diseased mind. Riel began a reference to the lack of responsible government in the territory.

"An irresponsible government" he began. In the pause his alert mind was caught by a pun. "An irresponsible government is an insane government." Elaborations occurred to him which he vented. The conduct of the Canadian government in ignoring the Metis' petitions for years, was "government paralysis." Government paralysis was a symptom of a government's "diseased mind," he said in parody of the medical witnesses, and went on to employ the puns argumentatively.

"If you take the plea of the defence that I am not responsible for my acts, acquit me completely, since

I have been quarrelling with an irresponsible government. If you pronounce in favor of the Crown and declare that I am responsible, then acquit me all the same. You are perfectly justified in declaring that, having my reason and sound mind, I have acted rationally and in self-defence, while the government, my accuser, being irresponsible and consequently insane, cannot but have acted wrong, and if high treason there is, it must be on its side and not on my part.

"For fifteen years I have been neglecting myself. Even one of the hardest witnesses on me said that with all my vanity I was not particular about my clothing; yes, because I have never had much to buy clothing. My wife and children are without means, while I am working more than any representative of the North West. Although I am only a guest of the country, I worked to better the condition of Saskatchewan at the risk of my life. I have never had any pay. It has always been my hope to have a fair living some day. It will be for you to pronounce—if you say I was right you can conscientiously acquit me, as I hope, through the help of God, you will. You will console those who have been fifteen years around me, partaking in my sufferings. What you will do in justice to me, in justice to my family, in justice to the North West, will be rendered a hundred times to you in this world, and to use a sacred expression, life everlasting in the other."

Chapter Twenty-Five

Verdict and Sentence

THE case of Riel went to the jury the next day after his address to it. Court had adjourned directly after his speech, and the jurymen, who were kept together under guard day and night for the duration of the trial, discussed with each other that evening the address of Riel, which had so powerfully impressed them all with his sanity that Fitzpatrick's eloquence faded from their attention, leaving only the faint impression that it had been a bit of legal trickery.

When Robinson for the Crown continued the trial next morning, combatting the arguments of the defence lawyers and arguing Riel's sanity, his effort was quite superfluous — Riel had done the work better than any counsel could do it.

The presiding magistrate gave the jury neither counsel nor assistance. He cited the legal definition of high treason which that particular jury had already decided was legal fancy-work in language with little relevance to crime as they understood crime. He read an address of less than five hundred words which was delivered in less than five minutes, reminding the jurymen that it was an important case requiring serious consideration, and concluding with the instruction that if they thought the prisoner guilty of the charge they should so declare him and if not they should bring in a verdict of "not guilty." He omitted to instruct them that they were to give the prisoner the benefit of any doubt.

The device of Riel's counsel to plead insanity and the shift of their entire attention to that question had given the trial a shape such that Riel's activities had never been analysed in any detail, nor had they been analysed and examined in any detail in relation to the definition of high treason. But the jury knew that he had been the leader of the half breeds who, in an agitation to obtain rights of wrongs with which every man on the jury sympathized,

had gone the length of resisting the Mounted Police in unusual force against them, with arms, and of shedding blood in the encounters, and that they had fought the Canadian Army fiercely until they ran out of ammunition. The jurymen entertained strong private doubts about the wisdom of the government in ordering the police and the troops to behave as they had. But there was no getting round the fact that Riel had led the Metis and that they had made resistance with armed violence, which was a kind of treason. The jury was out half an hour.

They brought in a verdict of "guilty," but attached a rider recommending mercy. They could have given their main decision without leaving the box; they spent the half hour debating what they could do to help Riel effectively, and in that desire they were unanimous.

"We were in a dilemma," Mr. Brooks, the only surviving jurymen at the time this biography was written, told the writer. "We could not pass judgment on the Minister of Interior, who was not on trial; and we had to give our finding on Riel according to the evidence. We refused to find him insane. The only thing we could do was to add the clause to our verdict, recommending mercy. We knew it wasn't much, but it was not an empty formal expression, and it expressed the serious desire of every one of the six of us."

Riel sat silent and alone while the jury was out, but without any sign of nervousness. He received the verdict with no sign of surprise or disappointment.

"The court has done the work for me," were his first exultant words, when he accepted the usual invitation of the magistrate to speak before sentence was pronounced. "Up to the present moment I have been considered by one party as insane, by another as criminal, and by another as a man with whom it

is doubtful whether to have intercourse. By the verdict of the court one of these three situations has disappeared. Now I will cease to be called a fool and for me that is a great advantage. If I have a mission—and I say 'if' for the sake of those who doubt, but for my part it means 'since'—since I have a mission, I could not fulfill that mission as long as I was looked upon as insane."

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SO obsessive was his determination to break down this suspicion of insanity that he continued the argument with every notion that occurred to him. Recalling that the medical men had declared that one symptom of insanity was excitability, particularly when crossed or contradicted, he argued exultantly after the verdict, "If ever there have been contradictions in my life, there are now. Contradictions about religion, and politics too. Do I appear excited? Am I irritable? Can I control myself? The smile that comes on my face is not an act of my own will so much as it comes naturally from the satisfaction that I experience in seeing my difficulties disappearing."

He turned from the matter to use this last opportunity to issue his story of his work for the Metis people to the public, and to explain what he felt to be justifications of all that he had done. He related the breach of promises for amnesty, of the loyal service of the Metis in the Fenian affair in Manitoba, of the injustices to the Metis in the distribution of Manitoba lands after the Manitoba Act, explained his demand for compensation of \$35,000.

But few listened. It was an anticlimax. The newspaper reporters present whom he hoped would be his channel of communication with the whole country either condensed their reports so that they were

difficult for strangers to understand, or omitted it entirely, and the eastern public did not read what was printed, with any attention. The sensation of Riel was past and gone, with the verdict.

"My wish is that a commission be appointed," Riel said in closing, "and I would have that commission examine these questions:

"Did Riel 'rebel' in 1889?

"Was Riel the 'murderer' of Scott, when Scott was executed?

"When Riel received money from Archbishop Tache, was it 'corruption'?

"When Riel seized the property of the Hudson's Bay Company, was it 'pillage'?

"When Riel was expelled from parliament as a fugitive from justice, was he a 'fugitive from justice'?

"I wish my entire career to be tried and not merely the last part of it. I wish that while the commission sits on one side, another commission, of doctors, should sit and examine fully whether I am sane, whether I am a prophet. Not insanity but whether I am an imposter, a deceiver."

He displayed fatigue toward the end and waited a moment to rest. He concluded on a weakening note: whether his wish was practical or not he "bowed respectfully to the court." "If I have been astray, I have been astray not as an imposter, but according to conscience."

The presiding magistrate's concluding remarks were brief: "For what you have done the remarks which you have made form no justification whatever. In spite of the recommendation for mercy, I cannot hold out any hope to you that you will succeed in getting entirely free, or after what you have been the cause of doing, Her Majesty will open her clemency to you."

He then sentenced Louis Riel to be hanged on September 18, 1885.

Chapter Twenty-Six

The Appeal Fails

THE Canadian public did not expect that the sentence of death upon Riel would be executed.

Ambrose Lepine had been sentenced to be hanged after the Manitoba affair, but he served only two years in prison. It was not usual at that time for British countries to punish political offenders with death. Political agitation was established as a right of minorities. Britain herself tolerated minorities and protected their right to agitate without retaliating by sending its troops into their midst or using its police force as military troops. Conditions in the North West had come to be somewhat better understood in the central provinces in the last fifteen years.

Party discipline had united the English and the French speaking factions into joint party organizations crossing the factions, and racial antagonism was losing its harsher rancors; race and religious controversies had abated in the last two elections. The Canadian frame of mind immediately after the trial was such that it would have accepted clemency for Riel without resentments.

The admission that the Metis probably suffered serious injustice had been made before the trial of Riel, when Macdonald within a week of the battle of Duck Lake had announced the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, followed by the appointment of Thomas White to the Ministry of the Department of the Interior. The personal feeling of the jury in the Riel trial had got some publicity in the eastern press—a correspondent of one Toronto newspaper reported that three of the jurors had told him it was their firm opinion that Riel should not be hanged and that their recommendation for mercy had been meant to be taken seriously. This frank statement of jurymen to the general

public had been given attention and not unfavorably.

On his return to jail after sentence Riel was placed under the strictest supervision by the Mounted Police, with exercise of complete censorship over letters received or sent, denial of newspapers, or of press interviews, and permission to only his spiritual advisers and a few friends approved by the government to visit him. He lost contact with everything outside his cell and had only hazy ideas of the movements of his friends in his behalf.

The persons who had organized to provide his three defence counsel, appealed on his behalf to the Supreme Court of Manitoba, challenging the finding of the jury that Riel was responsible for his acts. The appeal was not a success, three members of the court finding that the jury would not have been justified in returning a different verdict. Had the appeal been successful Riel would have been transferred to an insane asylum. But the action delayed the execution one month, from September 18 to October 18.

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PETITIONS largely signed in Quebec were sent to the Governor-General praying for clemency. Many of these bore the signature of the parish priest in the place of honor at the beginning of the list, followed by that of the mayor. Other petitions were presented by people of the North West and of Manitoba, and scattered places all across the country. They were not uniform — in fact were quite various as to reasons cited for asking clemency and as to the measure of mercy sought. Petitions even came to the Governor-General from some points in the United States and France and from London, England. There were a few petitions from Orange Societies and from persons of Regina and Moosomin, praying that the sentence be not disturbed.

Letters both signed and anonymous were sent direct to the cabinet ministers and to Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald.

But in spite of these efforts and early favorable circumstances, public opinion was shortly influenced by what happened when Metis and Indians in large numbers were arrested and placed on trial. Riel being under sentence of death already, they nearly all made him the scapegoat for themselves in their evidence given in self defence. Charles Nolin, Riel's cousin, who had three times turned against Riel after involving himself in Riel's agitations, and who had given fantastic evidence against Riel at his trial, now on trial himself exaggerated his previous efforts, swearing that he, Nolin, alone had prevented Riel from massacring the police at Fort Carleton, that Riel conducted blood sacrifices of a most hideous nature, and that his leadership was infamous, terrifying and blasphemous.

Even the generous-hearted Father Andre made amazing affidavit against Riel in an attempt to protect the many of his parishioners who were arrested. He declared that four men alone were responsible for and guilty of insurrection—Riel, Carriere, who was dead, Nault and Dumont who were safe across the American border. Andre then gave testimony of good character to each individual Metis awaiting trial—among them many of the most prominent followers and supporters of the Ex Ovede.

The defence lawyers for these prisoners outdid Father Andre in such methods of protecting their clients.

The damage done to Riel by this sort of thing was that all such evidence was seized upon to circulate in the less intelligent centres of Ontario, and contributed to the legend of Riel's viciousness, savagery, and insanity, which became a tradition which even yet has considerable credence.

The Prime Minister was concerned chiefly with the development of public opinion. He made

some serious errors in estimating and interpreting it. He knew Ontario and had no difficulty in assessing the swings of feeling there. But he was not so successful in Quebec, nor had he good interpreters in his Quebec colleagues. They exaggerated the importance to public opinion of the differences between Riel and the Church, and failed to observe closely the developments of feelings among the masses in Quebec. Macdonald's Quebec colleagues told him that French Canadians were indifferent to the fate of Riel. This had been true until the racial and religious feud with Ontario had attracted their attention to him after which he had become a legendary figure symbolic of themselves in relation to Ontario persecution. With his re-appearance in the national spotlight, this pervasive legend crystallized with an influence which the French speaking ministers underestimated. The Macdonald government now opposed an application made by a younger group of French-speaking politicians to appeal beyond the Supreme Court of Manitoba to the Privy Council—the desire of this group being to promote the acceptance of Riel's insanity.

Delay of the Privy Council to pass judgment led to a further postponement of Riel's execution to November 16.

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RIEL, who had no knowledge of all that was transpiring, was told by Sheriff Chapleau of the suspension for another month. "It is better to have the sentence suspended than the man," he punned to the sheriff, and passed calmly to other conversation.

In spite of Macdonald's determination to have the sentence carried out, the situation was such that any sort of outcome was possible. At this critical moment, Honore Mercier, recently appointed Liberal party leader in Quebec province, suddenly emerged into the national limelight as a new and formidable political force—he detected the amorphous sentiment for the legend of Riel among the

masses in Quebec and saw the advantage of using the symbol of Riel as a theme of potent attack upon the Macdonald government and particularly upon the Quebec members of it. Largely by its exploitation he overturned the Conservative provincial government and destroyed the supremacy in Quebec federal affairs of Macdonald and his Quebec colleagues. This successful coup in Quebec roused Ontario Conservative ministers to immediate partisan opposition within the cabinet and the old feud burst out again after prolonged smouldering under relatively non-racial election issues.

The rise of Mercier was no help to Riel; in fact it sealed his fate.

Ontario opinion was not as uniformly hostile as it had been fifteen years before. Dr. Daniel Clarke, superintendent of a Toronto asylum, who had testified at the Regina trial that Riel was insane, now broke into public view with a more emphatic assertion than he had made at the trial. He was widely respected and his emphasis in his letters to the public created confused doubts of the wisdom of Macdonald's decision not to concede clemency. Macdonald resorted to the device of appointing a commission of three medical men to justify the Crown witnesses at the trial and confirm the sentence of the court. These men were Dr. Jukes, surgeon of the Mounted

Police at Regina, Dr. Lavall, surgeon of the Kingston penitentiary, a constituent and political supporter of the Prime Minister, and Dr. Vallade who was not a practising physician but a chemist. This commission obliterated Dr. Clarke's contention.

The controversy became more bitter with every move that Macdonald made. Hon. Thomas White, his recently appointed Minister of Interior with direct administration of the North West Territory, complained to Macdonald that when he had been in Winnipeg a few days before, his supporters who had been preparing a public reception for him had stampeded at a newspaper report that the government had appointed the medical commission and he, White, had just missed being rotten-egged.

Macdonald did not discover the full violence of Quebec mass reactions until two days before the day fixed for Riel's execution. Sixteen Quebec Conservative members of Parliament telegraphed him protesting the execution and threatening to withdraw their support from him in the House of Commons if denied their petition. But the special medical commission had so recently declared their findings and with so much publicity that Macdonald could not draw back without losing his support in Ontario.

Riel had to die.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

The Final Chapter

WHILE the nation rocked under the stresses of partisan political storms, especially fierce in central Canada, Riel, who knew nothing of the tumult in which his legend was was the central symbol, lived quietly in his cell, immersed in writing two studies on religious themes.

He formed an intimate friendship with Dr. Jukes, surgeon of the Mounted Police, who had twice testified to his sanity—to Riel's own gratification. With Dr. Jukes he discussed candidly and carefully the questions of prophecies, communications with the unseen, delusions and hallucinations, and his strong sense of sanctified mission which had developed in the period of his banishment but had been incipient from his youth. In Riel these mystical manifestations had been predominantly visual but sometimes also verbal. While in prison the visual manifestations had become more frequent and more vivid. He told Dr. Jukes about each of them.

Dr. Jukes' firm opinion he wrote as: "I am confident from a careful and prolonged study of the man, that on the subject of his delusions, Riel practised no deception, but is as firm a believer in his own prophetic interpretations as Swedenborg in his spiritual vision." However absurd they might appear, Dr. Jukes believed that the inspirations by "mystical manifestations were real and true to Riel.

"I quite appreciate what you say," said Riel to Jukes when they were discussing his case candidly. "I have the greatest respect for your opinion as a physician, but it is the Physician of physicians who guides me. Nothing can convince me that the voices which speak to me are not of the spirit."

Dr. Jukes accounted for the increasing number of such illusions at this time, by his falling health caused by long confinement and in-

sufficient sleep "to which may be added the spiritual exercises and influence of Father Andre, who would gladly render him insane to save him from the gallows."

Between Riel and Pere Andre there grew up in these last weeks a warm friendship and a genuine respect. Andre was a large hearted, broadly tolerant, much loved parish priest (a Corsican, not a French Canadian), whose attitude to his flock was that of a paternal benevolent despot. He administered penance to the youth often with his large powerful right hand in forceful spanking and he was not always a respecter of age in such disciplines. But his heart governed his head, and in the complicated affairs of Riel his behaviors had not always been consistent. After Riel had been condemned, Andre had done his best to save from punishment the scores of others who had been arrested by loading all the blame on Riel. Then he had tried to help Riel by providing the medical commission with whatever data supported insanity. When one of the doctors reminded him that the Roman Catholic church did not administer the sacrament to persons of unsound mind, he thought up another answer. Riel, who had had stormy passages with Andre in his brief period in Saskatchewan, forgave and loved him now.

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AT Andre's urging he recanted his heresies in his last will and testament written a few days before his death, which was mostly an expression of thanks to friends and his wife, admonitions to his children, and of forgiveness of all those who had caused him chagrin, who had given him pain. "All those who have done me harm and persecuted me, who have without any reason made war upon me for five years, who have given me the semblance of a trial and if they really mean to give me death, I pardon them."

During a conversation in the evening with Dr. Jukes, the Sheriff entered to inform him that he would be executed in the morning. Riel said, "I thought I had twenty-four hours." The Sheriff explained the arrangements. Riel was calm dignified and composed. He spoke to both with his usual politeness and even laughed quietly at some further remarks of the Sheriff. He told Dr. Jukes that he had slept well the previous night and would not sleep that night.

At two o'clock on the morning of the day of his execution he wrote his last letter—a loving affectionate farewell to his mother, with whom his wife and children had gone to live at St. Vital in Manitoba—a third baby had been born there during his imprisonment but had died without being seen by Riel. "I received your letter of benediction and yesterday, Sunday, I asked Father Andre to place it on the altar during the celebration of mass in order that I might be under the shadow of its blessing. I asked him afterward to place his hands on my head that I might worthily receive it" "I do what I can to keep myself ready for any event, remaining quiet in accordance with the pious exhortation of Venerable Archbishop--Bourget" (the cleric who, he firmly believed, had discovered and approved his mission).

To Father Andre, who kept vigil with him, he said "Do not fear. I shall not shame my friends or rejoice my enemies by dying a coward. The thought of passing my life in an insane asylum or penitentiary ... fills me with terror and I accept death with joy and gratitude."

He had cherished the intention of

speaking at the last from the scaffold, which was his right. But on the solemn march toward it, Father Andre urged, "You do not wish to speak in public. You make that sacrifice to God."

"Oui, mon pere," said Riel conceding the dear wish, "I make to God as a sacrifice the speaking to the public in this last hour."

He walked slowly, solemnly and prayerfully to his end.

He was 41 years of age.

His wife survived him for but six months. His daughter died in her youth and his son lived to have a brief career as a civil engineer but died in young manhood, childless.

Louis Riel has no direct descendants living today.

The Metis in 1928 numbered about 40,000 scattered throughout western Canada. They are for the most part fully assimilated Canadians. They maintain their identity only in quiet associations by which they keep alive their past struggles for freedom and equal rights, but they take no united or organized action as a separate entity in political activities. The need for such action was removed by the result of their terrible struggle under Louis Riel which wrought upon public opinion to compel the Canadian government to redress their grievances.

Even before the end of that struggle Prime Minister Macdonald had appointed Thomas White, a very capable administrator, to the Department of the Interior. Sir Richard Cartwright said in his "Recollections," "Had Thomas White been in office a few years earlier, I am certain no rebellion would have occurred."



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